

Supplement1

This historical supplement was obtained from Army archives by John-Al Skimbo

ANNUAL SUPPLEMENT
HISTORY OF THE
48th ASSAULT HELICOPTER COMPANY
10TH COMBAT AVIATION BATTALION
1ST AVIATION BRIGADE

1 January 1967 - 31 December 1967

Prepared by
Major Robert E. Harris
Unit Historical Officer

APPROVED BY:

//Signed//

JERRY L. FLEMING

Major Armor
Commanding

Ninh Hoa, Republic of Vietmm

APO 96240

DEPARTMENT OF THE ARMY

48th Assault Helicopter Company

APO San Francisco 96240

1 January 66 - 31 December 1967

In January 1966 the 48th Assault Helicopter Company and attached supporting units consisting of the 390th Transportation Detachment., the 279th Signal Detachment, and the 286th Medical Detachment, was located in Tuy Hoa, RVN, in support of the 1st Brigade, 101st Airborne Division. Additionally, lmany missions were flown in support of the 9th Republic of Korea Infantry Division (White Horse).

On 18 January 1967, with Major Joel L. Williams commanding, the 48th Assault Helicopter Company returned to its' home base of Phan Rang. The unit had not been back to Phan Rang since 24 May 1966. The mission was to provide aviation support to the Airborne Brigade, co-located at Phan Rang.

The pace of activities in January is reflected in the statistical accomplishments of 8,771 sorties, 2,625 hours flown, 11,492 passengers transported, and 578 tons of cargo air lifted. Personnel of the 48th also completed 23 medical evacuation missions during the month.

On 8 February 1967 USARPKC General Order Number 30 officially redesignated the 48th Aviation Company (Airmobile) (Light) as the 48th Assault Helicopter Company. A Modified Table of Organization and Equipment, Numbered 01 077G was implimented at the same time. The major changes involved the addition of personnel in operations, adding an intelligence section, and in aircraft authorization., now reflecting 23 lift ships, or "slicks," and eight (8) gun ships.

During the months of February, March, and April, The 48th Assault Helicopter Company

remained at Phan Rang in support of the 101st Airborne, however, more and more support was provided to the 9th Republic of Korea Infantry Division (White Horse). Statistical data for this period of time is as follows:

<u>-</u> <u>Sorties</u>	<u>Hours Flown</u>	<u>Passengers</u>	<u>Cargo</u> <u>Tons</u>
12,351	6,458	23,097	577

One aircraft was shot down by hostile fire during March, but no casualties were sustained. On 1 March 1967, Major Robert L. Young assumed command of the unit, replacing Major Joel J. Williams.

On 1 May the unit was assigned the mission of providing aviation support to the 9th Republic of Korea Infantry Division (White Horse) and a forward base of operations was established at Ninh Hoa. The mission of the 48th Assault Helicopter Company remains unchanged. This mission heralded the beginning of marked increases in combat actions and sorties, and a continual gaining of mutual respect, admiration and friendship between this unit and soldiers of the Korean Allied Force. Combat assaults and operations were nearly continuous throughout the remainder of 1967. In May, the 48th Assault Helicopter Company logged a remarkable 2,815 flying hours while transporting 16,555 passengers, 228 tons of cargo, 46 medical evacuations, and a night extraction of 20 POWs.

June performances were similar with 2,754 flying hours logged. Five aircraft were hit by hostile fire during June, resulting in two (2) wounded personnel. No ships were lost to enemy action.

During the period of April, May, and June, members of the 48th Assault Helicopter Company were awarded four (4) Army Commendation Medals, fifty-five (55) Basic Air Medals, four (4) Air Medals for Valor, eight (8) Bronze Stars for Meritorious Service, four (4) Distinguished Flying Crosses, one (1) Soldiers Medal, and one (1) Silver Star.

On 1 July an aircraft on a resupply mission was lost to enemy ground fire. The ship burned on impacts injuring three (3) crew members. Major Mike Ellis was assigned as Company Commander on 14 July. The Months activities are summarized in the reporting of 2,658 flight hours, 11,992 passengers transported, 146 tons of cargo air lifted, and 19 medical evacuations. Total sorties were 11,217. One aircraft was hit by ground fire in August and three (3) ships hit in September, three (3) crew members were wounded. Statistical data for the months of August and September are as follows:

<u>-</u> <u>Month</u>	<u>Hours</u>	<u>Sorties</u>	<u>Passengers</u>	<u>Cargo</u> <u>(ton)</u>	<u>Med</u> <u>Evac</u>
August	2,644	12,720	13,529	150	7

September	2,867	14,382	15,369	164	16
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During the months of July, August, and September, members of the 48th Assault Helicopter Company were awarded three (3) Army Commendation Medals, twenty-nine (29) Basic Air Medals, seven (7) Air Medals for Valor, three (3) Purple Hearts, twelve (12) Bronze Stars, and eight (8) Distinguished Flying Crosses.

On 29 October, the Ninh Hoa installation was mortared for the first time. A total of six (6) rounds landed in the compound, none of which were in the 48th Assault Helicopter Company Area. The Koreans sustained nine (9) casualties, one fatality. During the various actions in October the units' gunships were credited with 26 enemy KIA.

On 1 November the remainder of the rear support elements of the 48th Assault Helicopter Company moved to Ninh Hoa. Major John C. Fordham assumed command on 4 November. On 9 November all flyable aircraft were flown to Pleiku in order to escape a typhoon forecast to enter the Ninh Hoa area on 10 November. The typhoon struck at approximately 0500 hours on 10 November. Nearly all the tents and frames in the 48th Aslt Hel Co area were destroyed, along with considerable equipment and personal belongings. No injuries were sustained. During 14 November, the gun ships were credited with 14 enemy KIA. On 2 December, one of this units aircraft, number 60811 was returning to Ninh Hoa from Phu Hiep. The aircraft did not arrive at Ninh Hoa and was listed as missing, it has not been found to date. In the months of October., November, and December, men of the 48th Assault Helicopter Company were awarded four (4) Purple Hearts, too (2) Army Commendation Medal., fourteen (14) Basic Air Medals, five (5) Air Medals for Valor, four (4) Bronze Stars, and one (1) Distinguished Flying Cross. Operational statistics for this period of time are as follows:

<u>Month</u>	<u>Hours</u>	<u>Sorties</u>	<u>Passengers</u>	Cargo (Tons)	Med Evac
October	1,732	11,591	13,822	132	25
November	1,660	12,210	14,605	132	30
December	1,497	10,430	13,836	119	22

During the period of June through December 1967, the 48th Assault Helicopter Company participated in the following Regimental sized operations. Numerous smaller, un-named operations were conducted but are not indicated in this report.

5 Jun - 20 Jun	MA DOO#2, 28th Regiment, 9th ROKA Division, on Chi Mountain, Resulting in 31 enemy dead.
24 Jun - 5 Jul	Vonh MA#1, 30th Regiment, 9th ROKA Division, in the vicinity of Hao Chuhi, resulting in 13 enemy dead.
9 Jul - 17 Jul	Hong Kil Pong#1, 9th ROKA Division, in the vicinity of Cong Son, resulting in 173 enemy dead.

16 Jul - 6 Aug	Hong Kil Pong#2, 28th Regiment, 9th ROKA Division, in the vicinity of Cong Son, resulting in 58 enemy dead.
22 Sep - 29 Sep	Do Kae Bi#3, 28th Regiment, 9th ROKA Division, in the vicinity of Canh Phooc, Resulting in 103 enemy KIA.
24 Oct - 28 Oct	Ninh Hoa#1, 29th Regiment, 9th ROKA Division, in the vicinity of Ninh Hoa, resulting in 133 enemy KIA.
30 Oct - 7 Nov	Do Hae Di#3, 28th Regiment, 9th ROKA Division, in the vicinity of Tan My, resulting in 23 enemy KIA.
6 Nov - 8 Nov	Ninh Hoa#2, 29th Regiment, 9th ROKA Division, in the vicinity of Ninh Hoa, resulting in 140 enemy KIA.
7 Nov - 9 Nov	Phooc Doc#1, 28th Regiment, 9th ROKA Division, resulted in 55 enemy KIA.
26 Nov - 28 Nov	Dizn Khanh#1, 30th Regiment, 9th ROKA Division, resulting in 49 enemy KIA.
13 Dec - 14 Dec	Bak Jul#1, 29th Regiment, 9th ROKA Division, in the Ninh Heung Valley, resulting in 11 enemy KIA.
21 Dec - 22 Dec	Bak Jul#4, 29th Regiment, 9th ROKA Division, in the Ninh Heung Valley, resulting in 6 enemy KIA.
31 Dec	My Phong, 28th Regiment, 9th ROKA Division, resulted in 35 enemy KIA.

[Back to Memories Page](#)

Supplement2

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ANNUAL SUPPLEMENT
HISTORY OF THE
48th ASSAULT HELICOPTER COMPANY
10th Combat Aviation Battalion
1st Aviation Brigade

1 January 1968 - 31 December 1968

Prepared by:
W01 Harvey W. Prather Jr.
Unit Historical Officer

Approved by:

//signed//

VICTOR E MICOL JR
Major, Infantry
Commanding

Ninh Hoa, Republic of Vietnam

APO San Francisco 96240

FORWARD

The Officers and men of the 48th Assault Helicopter Company have experienced a year of extreme toil and hardships due to the lack of personnel. Morals and self esteem have overcome stumbling block and have caused the personnel of this unit to accomplish their many missions with true professionalism. We of the 48th Assault Helicopter Company take pride in the fact that our past history is unblemished. We know also the war was not won yesterday but the end will be quickened only through the ever increasing work of tomorrow.

The attitudes of a few men, newly separated from the comforts and security of their homes, were negative upon entry into this country. While working with and for the people of Vietnam, the attitudes have changed sharply. It is with extreme anticipation that we look into the future to the tasks that will help end the war and return peace within Vietnam.

//signed//

VICTOR E MICOL JR

Major, Infantry

Commanding

(A hand drawn Blue Star with company motto was in this space)

COMMANDERS

Major John C. Fordham Jr.	1 January - 10 February 1968
Major Jerry L. Fleming	11 February - 12 August 1968
Major Robert E. Harris	13 August - 26 December 1968
Major Victor E. Micol Jr.	27 December - 31 December 1968

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DEPARTMENT OF THE ARMY

48th Assault Helicopter Company

APO San Francisco 96240

UNIT OPERATIONS - 1 January 1968 - 31 December 1968

In January 1968, the 48th Assault Helicopter Company and attached supporting units consisting of the 390th Maintenance Detachment, 286th Medical Detachment, and the 279th Signal Detachment, within the 10th Combat Aviation Battalion performed the mission of general support of the 9th Republic of Korean Infantry Division (White Horse).

General support of the 9th ROK Infantry Division include daily resupply, combat assaults, final extraction, Administrative troop movements, transporting VIP's, convoy cover, overhead troop cover, reconnaissance missions and tactical emergency missions. In addition, this unit has provided support as required to the surrounding American and Vietnamese units. Support provided these units include medical evacuations, emergency repair parts movements, expediting personnel movements in emergency calls from vehicles under attack, reconnaissance missions, and friendly assistance to small outposts.

During the months from January through March, the 48th Assault Helicopter Co suffered from a serious shortage of personnel within the attached units. The following vacancies existed.

*9th ROK Division Liaison	68F20-Sr Electrical Rprm
*761A-Unit Tech Supply	70A10-General Clerk
*6716-Aircraft Repair Technician	(4)68G20-Airplane Rprm
92B20-Medical Lab Spec	67N20-Helicopter Mech

91B30-Sr Med Aid Man	68D20-Power Train Rprm
35W20-Avn Equip Mech	68E20-Rotar Rprm
76V20-Avionics	76Y20-General Rprm
44E20-Machinist	(4)68B20-Aircraft Engine Rprm
(2)68B20-Sr Airplane Rprm	(3)68A10-Tool Room Keeper

Warrant Officers, 062B, were utilized in vacant TO&E supervisory positions. The personnel shortage problem, however, was compounded by the loss of three operational pilots being utilized to fill these slots. (slots filled with Warrant Officers).

The inherent language barrier had, on occasion, resulted in less than acceptable reaction time, particularly within the armed helicopter realm of operations. This problem was alleviated somewhat by placing an English speaking Korean Officer on board the aircraft to coordinate between the ground commander and the aircraft.

During the period 1 January 1968 to 31 January 1968, the units conducted combat assaults resulting in 12 KIA's.

The operational results for January are as follows: 2,1451 hours flown 7,921 sorties, 810 tons of cargo and 13,216 troops carried.

1 Feb 68 to Apr 68, the 48th Assault Helicopter Company conducted 129 coordinated combat assaults and extractions. Also, during this period, the unit carried 1,776 tons of cargo, 37,873 troops for a total of 13,106 tasks and 40,010 sorties.

The shortage of personnel in the A/C field maintenance continued to be detrimental to the combat effectiveness of this unit.

A med cap program was initiated in February starting with three (3) Montanard and three (3) Vietnamese villages. Visits were made to these villages on alternate Sundays. This program involved this unit plus personnel from the MIL-FAB Team and the MACV Team, both locations nearby. This program consisted of providing first aid treatment of minor ailments and recommendations for evacuation to a medical installation if the care necessitates it.

On 5 May until 17 May 1968 the unit was engaged in a division size combat operation, BAEK MA 6. The second phase started on 26 May 1968 and ended on 7 June 1968. During the second phase, this unit carried 1,402 troops into combat, extracted them, carried 1,254 troops into a combat area and extracted them upon completion of the operation. The results were: 305 VC Killed and 4 VC captured. Seized material were: 128 small arms, 1,0775 rounds of small arms ammunition, 109 hand grenades, 82 Artillery shells, 362 documents, 155 pounds of TNT, and 4,614 pounds of food. The friendly forces during this time reported light casualties.

On 21 May 1968, two armed Helicopter light fire teams (Jokers) of this unit performed escort duty for General William C. Westmoreland, Commanding General, Military Assistance Command,

Vietnam, on a visit to the Commanding General of the 9th ROK Division.

During the period of 25-27 June 1968, the 48th Assault Helicopter Company provided a flight of four Helicopters to Quin Nhon in support of the Capital ROK Infantry Division and on the third day assisted the 155th Assault Helicopter Company at Ban Me Thuot.

During the month of June, the unit in support of the 9th ROK Division element conducted 16 combat assaults and 11 troops extractions carrying a total of 59322 troops. For the month the unit flew 29,159 hours with 10,221 sorties, carried 16,697 passengers and hauled 733 tons of cargo.

On 6 July 1968, this unit planned and executed at the same time two (2) regimental size combat assaults 80 miles apart. The 28th Regiment, 9th ROK Division located in Tuy Hoa area conducted an assault in the mountains of Vung Ro Bay, with 541 troops employed, resulting in 10 KIA's, captured 6 small arms, 17 hand grenades along with food and personnel belongings. The 30th Regiment, located in the Phan Rang area, conducted a mountain assault also, with 526 troops employed, resulting in 44 KIA's, and capturing one (1) radio, 11 weapons, 5 mines, 80 pounds of TNT, documents, food, plus small arms ammunition, grenades and mortar rounds.

The 48th Assault Helicopter Company was called upon to provided transportation and escort for General Creighton W. Abrams., Commanding General, Military Assistance Command, Vietnam on 10 July 1968, during a routine visit.

On 7 July 1968, the unit participated in the planning and execution of a combat operation with the 29th Regiment, 9th ROK Division. The two phase operation was completed on 19 July 1968. Results were as follows: 129 KIA's, 2 prisoners, 35 small arms seized and 54 grenades.

During the month of July the Blue Star and the Jokers flew 2,299 hours, 11,112 sorties performed 2,702 tasks, lifted 18,038 troops and hauled 855 tons of cargo.

The 48th Assault Helicopter Co participated in 11 combat assaults during the month of August 1968, five of which were battalion size. On 3 August the unit lifted 1,017 troops into the mountains of Van Ninh. This operation netted 13 KIA. On 8 August troops of the 30th ROK Regiment were lifted into the mountains west of Dong Ba Thin. This heliborne operation netted 36 KIA and 1 POW. On 10 August, troops of the 29th ROK Regiment were lifted into the mountains west of Phu Heip which netted, 16 KIA's and 2 POW's. On 28 August a combat assault southwest of Ninh Hoa netted 7 KIA.

On 13 August 1968, the 48th Assault Helicopter Company said farewell to Major Jerry L. Fleming and welcomed Major Robert E. Harris in an official change of command ceremony conducted at Ninh Hoa.

During the month of August 1968 the 48th Assault Helicopter Company flew 21,509 hours., 11,294 sorties, 2,536 tasks, Lifted 18,284 troops and hauled 947 tons of cargo.

During the month of September 1968 the unit conducted 16 combat assaults and 10 extractions 3 of which were battalion size and 1 regimental plus it's normal daily resupply. On 6 September a combat assault near Phan Rang netted 49 KIA and 12 POW'S. On 9 September the unit supporting the 29th Regiment netted 12 KIA and 9 VC returned under the "Open Arms" program. On 19 September the unit performed a combat assault with the 28th Regiment which resulted in 25 KIA.

Statistics for the month of September are as follows: 2,401 hours flown, 10,323 sorties, 2,486 tasks, 15,049 troops and 852 tons of cargo.

During the month of October, the four (4) ROK Army pilots, having successfully completed their training, were returned to their parent organizations. These initial four pilots attached were taken from an experience level of 25 UH-1 hours to a 300 plus hour level and given an opportunity to experience every aspect of flying the UH-1 that normally is handled by any member of this unit.

On 11 October 1968, a division size combat assault began in connection with "BAEK MA 9", on 13 October "BAEK MA 9" started in the mountains south of Nha Trang. The results of 'BAEK. MA 9 were: 380 KIA, 9 POW's, 92 small arms captured, three (3) 82mm mortars, six (6) 60mm mortars captured 4 AR's 22,321 rounds of small arms ammunition, 84 rounds of other ammo, 160 grenades, 4 radios, 22 rifle grenades and 19 protective mask seized.

The new contonement area was completed sufficiently to allow all personnel to move into their new quarters during the month of October. The next phase will the final finishing of the area to include such things as leveling, ditching, planting sod, painting buildings and improving drainage.

The operational results for the month were: 2,402 hours flown, 10,851 sorties, 2,764 tasks, 17,716 troops carried and 806 tons of cargo.

On 19 November 1968, 680 men and equipment of the 1st Battalion, 28th Regiment were moved into the mountains southwest of Phu hiep for a 10 day period. The operation resulted in 5 enemy KIA.

On 20 November, 1,010 troops of the 29th Regiment were moved into the mountains northwest of Ninh Hoa for a 6 day period resulting in 16 enemy KIA and 1 POW.

On 22 November a combat assault in the 29th Regiment area resulted in 40 KIA.

The aircraft maintenance personnel of the 48th Assault Helicopter Company and the 390th Maintenance Detachment have once again proven their experience and sense of mission accomplishment in keeping aircraft in a flyable status. On 14 November, they reported 100% of the aircraft flyable, quite feat for this environment. On the next day, however, they again distinguished themselves by providing 100% flyable mission ready aircraft.

On 6 December, 509 troops from the 1st Battalion, 30th Regiment and the 48th Assault helicopter Company participated in an operation which netted 11 enemy KIA.

On 6 December the 3rd Battalion, 29th Regiment and the 48th Assault Helicopter Company initiated a combat assault which continued through the 21st of December. During the operation five (5) enemy KIA's were claimed.

On an eight day airmobile operation, conducted by 812 troops of the 2nd Battalion, 30th Regiment, and the 48th Assault Helicopter Company, the greatest number of enemy KIA's claimed during any single operation for the month netted 28 enemy KIA and 1 POW.

Blue Star aircraft participated in a six (6) day airlift operation (19-25 December) resulting in 14 KIA's, and 18 sticks of TNT, in the Ninh Hoa area.

On 25 December 1968, we lost our company commander, Major Robert Harris, due to a broken leg suffered during a softball game after Christmas dinner. We welcomed our new commanding officer, Major Victor E. Micol Jr., a familiar face around the 48th Assault Helicopter Company and better known as "Kimchi 33", who had been the ROK liaison officer for the past seven months.

The operational results during December are as follows: 2,361 hours flown, 9,524 sorties, 716 tons of cargo and 13,840 troops carried.

During the period 1 January through 31 December 1968 members of the 48th Assault Helicopter Company were awarded: 128 Basic Air Medals, 13 Air Medals with "V" devices, 2 Distinguished Flying Crosses, 25 Army Commendation Medals, 11 Purple Hearts, 10 Bronze Stars and 3 Soldiers Medals.

[Back to Memories Page](#)

PREFACE

Journalists refer to part of my service time as the period when *LBJ Goes to War*. More than three decades passed since I transferred to the 48th from a German airfield on the outskirts of Munich. The autumn of 1965 led to battles in the Ia Drang that ended European tours for many individuals. My orders specified placement with the 12th Aviation Group in Saigon. Nevertheless, by 1966 I was in the 48th resisting a motive to volunteer for a helicopter unit in Thailand. The journey to Vietnam was too drawn-out to do anything else but stay in the Central Highlands. Twelve months later logic told me there was a better way to earn a living. The Army and I parted ways. The war raged on while I went back to school to learn another occupation. Despite time's passage, the events in Captain McDowell's writing are as vivid today as they were long ago.

Two books published after 1966 relate in detail the ground action sustained by the 48th. They trace the combat operations of the 1st Brigade/101st Airborne Division. Unfortunately, the writers^{1,2} never acknowledged the source of their mobility nor armed helicopter support. Our history fills that gap. The first twelve chapters are a diary of day-to-day activities. In Chapter 13 company members appraise various events in poems and songs. An enclosure concludes with a description of air-mobile techniques and procedures.

A couple of incidents prompted me to search for this history. A colleague initially gave me a book saying: "Look at this, it reads on what you say." I read the title, scanned one page and handed it back saying: "It's about the 1st Cav, not the 48th." Then while speaking to collegians studying the Vietnam War, reaction from one student torpedoed my integrity. She told me that: "Everything you have said is in the book!" "What book," I asked. "*Chickenhawk*," she answered. *Chickenhawk*, the book I dismissed now challenged my creditability. A lift platoon pilot³ already told about events at Phan Rang, Tuy Hoa, and Dak To in a style unlike my own. Consequently, tracking down our history became an important task.

My first clue came from memory. Ed Brophy mentioned its existence during one of our in-country talks. Recollection of his narrative follows the words in Chapters 2 through 4. Years afterward I received a research paper about military folklore in Vietnam. Its author⁴ served with a quartermaster battalion and acknowledged pilfering reference material from our company files. His piracy caused some self-seeking anger. He procured a souvenir when I had none, but finding Joe Kochanski turned things around. Joe collected a mass of mementos from that first year and graciously gave me a copy of his original document. I have recorded that copy for submission to the public domain.

For those who were there, I hope the next few pages bring back some memories. For those who came after us, I hope you gain a little knowledge about your predecessors. For those who were never there, I hope you find this history to be an honest account of our experiences.

Finally, I dedicate this computerized version to the five persons lost on August 1, 1966. May we never forget Frank Gundaker, Richard Kitner, Ron Russell, Ernest Shuman, and Don Wallace.

John Freiberger III

Macedon, N.Y.

December, 1997

This history has been transcribed by John Feeiberger III from an old xerox copy of what was a memiographed original.

UNIT HISTORY

48TH ASSAULT HELICOPTER COMPANY (UH-1) (A)

5 July 1965 to 26 September 1966

Prepared By

JAMES I. McDOWELL

Captain, Transportation Corps

48TH AVIATION HISTORY

CHAPTER ONE: THE COMPANY IS FORMED

The 48th Aviation Company (Airmobile) (Light), with support detachments, the 390th Transportation Detachment, 279th Signal Detachment, and 286th Medical Detachment, was activated at Fort Benning, Georgia by General Order 200, Hq, Third US Army, on 5 July 1965. The only name listed on the 5 July morning report was that of Major Keith L. Groom, O4003648, the first Commanding Officer. The first enlisted entry on the morning report was Specialist Five Joseph B. Pearsey, which appeared on the 21st of July 1965. The following personnel strengths were authorized the 48th Aviation Company and the attached detachments:

UNIT	STRENGTH	TO&E
48th Avn Co (AML)	14 Off, 41 WO, 115 EM	1-77E w/c 1
390th TC Det (CHFM)	1 Off, 1 WO, 70 EM	55-500R w/c 9
286th Med Det	1 Off, 8 EM	8-500C w/c 9
279th Sig Det	1 Off, 9 EM	11-500D w/c 6

All personnel and equipment were to be obtained from locally available resources. The primary

source of personnel and equipment was the result of the 11th Air Assault Div (Test) and 2nd Infantry Div being reformed into the First Air Cavalry Division at Fort Benning, Georgia. The cadre officers were assigned from the 10th Avn Group and the EM came from various units declaring personnel excess as a result of their reorganization. The 48th Avn Co cadre coordinated through the S-4 officer of 10th Avn Group, Fort Benning, and received approximately 75% of their equipment through lateral transfer from the reorganizing units at Fort Benning. The remaining equipment and supplies were requisitioned through normal supply channels on a priority basis.

The pilots for the 48th Avn Co signed in at Hq, 10th Avn Group on 1 Sep 65. Nearly all the aviators reporting for duty with the 48th Avn Co were reassigned from European assignments and their tours had been curtailed as a result of the Vietnam build up.

Major Charles H. Drummond Jr assumed command of the 48th Avn Co on 1 Sep 65. From the personnel data cards completed by each officer inprocessing, Major Drummond established his chain of command. His key personnel were:

Major Charles H. Drummond Jr CO

SFC E7 George C. Daws 1/Sgt

Major Robert L. Stearns XO

Major Thomas L. Williamson Opns Off

Major Willis E. Smith 1st Airlift Plt Ldr

Major Harry J. Zellmer 2nd Airlift Plt Ldr

Major Velma F. Parker 3rd Plt Ldr(Gun Plt)

Captain Paul R. Lalumiere Jr Intel Off

Key personnel for attached detachments were:

Major Edward R. Brophy Jr CO, 390th TC Det

Captain Orlon B. Donaldson III CO, 279th Sig Det

Captain Arthur R. Hagen CO, 286th Med Det

During the month of September 1965, the company worked a seven day week and directed their efforts toward POR qualifying all personnel and to drawing, processing and packing TO&E and TA50 equipment for overseas shipment. Training days were alternated with work days. The training schedule included 10

hours refresher training per pilot, weapons qualification, survival, escape and evasion, code of conduct, Geneva Convention, first aid, pilot briefings on tactics and techniques and a general Vietnam orientation. The pilots trained in aircraft belonging to the 181st Avn Tng Co, Fort Benning, Georgia.

On 17 September 1965 Capt Rex Saindon, 1LT Robert Smith, CWO Thomas Paulson, CWO Kenneth Hill, CWO Gary Wilkinson, and WO [Glade] Fisher ferried five 48th Avn Co UH-1 helicopters to Eagle Mountain Army Depot, Fort Worth, Texas where they picked up five additional helicopters and continued to Stackton Army General Depot, California where the aircraft were processed for overseas shipment.

On 30 September the company conducted payday activities and all personnel desiring leave were granted leave until 18 October 1965. Personnel not desiring leave remained at Fort Benning and continued packing equipment.

Prior to movement overseas the 48th Avn Co and its detachments received inspections from the Inspector General, 3rd U.S. Army.

The 48th Avn Co and detachments were directed overseas by letter, United States Army Infantry Command, dated 8 September 1965, Subject: Permanent Change of Station of STRAF Forces.

CHAPTER TWO: ADVANCED PARTY DEPART TO ACCOMPANY AIRCRAFT OVERSEAS

On 14 October 1965 Major Edward R. Brophy Jr, Captain Max Mitchell, Captain Arthur Moen, Captain Arthur Hagen, CWO James V. McCartt, CWO Wayne F. Geer, and 20 enlisted personnel were called off leave to form the advance party to accompany the aircraft overseas. This advanced party boarded a bus for Atlanta, Georgia on 18 October. From Atlanta they flew commercial air to San Francisco International Airport. They reported to Alameda Naval Air Station, Oakland, California where they signed for 16 UH-1D and 9 UH-1B helicopters. The helicopters had already been processed for overseas shipment and had their main rotor blades, stabilizer bars, and tail rotor removed. The gun kits were boxed and secured inside the aircraft. The aircraft were zipped and locked inside large seaborne protective bags and loaded aboard the USNS KULA GULF, a baby aircraft carrier.

The advanced party for aircraft sailed from Alameda Naval Air Station, Oakland, California on 25 October 1965 aboard the USNS KULA GULF. The ship made one stop in the Philippine Islands prior to arriving at Cam Ranh Bay, RVN on 13 Nov 65. Five days out from Vietnam the advanced party started deprocessing and reassembling their helicopters.

Major Brophy, on the 13th of November flew one of the reassembled helicopters from the KULA GULF to Dong Ba Thin to coordinate with the CO, 10th Avn Bn in order to determine the new assignment and duty station for the 48th. Major Brophy was advised to proceed to Vung Tau, that the 48th was assigned to the 145th Avn Bn with duty station Vung Tau.

After being tied up in Cam Ranh Bay harbor for three days, the USNS KULA GULF again set sail with the 48th Avn Co advanced party and helicopters aboard, this time with its destination as Vung Tau, RVN. They were met at Vung Tau on 16 Nov 65 by Major Smith, Co, 611th Transportation Company. Major Smith assigned Major Brophy and the other pilots the call sign "BLUE STAR" to signal the arrival to the Vung Tau tower operator of the 48th Avn Co aircraft. The aircraft were flown off the USNS KULA GULF by 48th Avn pilots and parked in the "BLUE STAR" parking area. The remaining equipment on board the carrier was off loaded in seven CH-37 med hel loads. (The name "BLUE STAR" has remained with the 48th Avn Co since 16 Nov 65, however, the call sign was changed twice officially, though not in fact, and the Company Commander in both cases was able to get the Blue Star title back). The advanced party commenced de-preservation and safety of flight inspections on the aircraft and assembled and attached the gun systems to the aircraft. In the meantime, Major Brophy had made contact with

the 145th Avn Bn and he was advised that the 48th Avn Co had been transferred to the 10th Avn Bn and would relocate immediately to the Phan Rang Valley approximately [150] miles north of Vung Tau.

On 23 November 1965 Captain Rosengrant of the rear/advanced party had caught a flight aboard an Army Caribou from Nha Trang to Saigon attempting to link up with the advanced party for aircraft and to coordinate the meeting of the main body at Cam Ranh Bay on the 26th of November. Captain Rosengrant made contact with Captain Mitchell at 12th Avn Group Hqs, Saigon. He later met with Major Brophy and they arranged to have three aircraft meet the main body at Cam Ranh Bay on the 26th.

The advanced party for aircraft remained at Vung Tau for approximately two weeks readying the unit aircraft. As sufficient space and security were provided at Phan Rang, the aircraft were shuttled, at the rate of three per day, until all aircraft were relocated to Phan Rang.

CHAPTER THREE: MAIN BODY DEPARTS FORT BENNING

The 48th Avn Co minus the advanced party with the aircraft (see chap 2) and the rear/advanced party (see chap 4) departed Muscogee County Airport, Columbus, at hourly intervals between 2330 hours 4 Nov 65 and 0330 hours 5 Nov 65 by commercial Super Constellation aircraft for Oakland International Airport. The move was classified to avoid public suspicion. Commercial buses were on hand to meet each aircraft as it landed at Oakland International and carried the 48th Avn Co personnel with baggage to Oakland Army Terminal where they promptly boarded the USNS Geiger, a Navy Troop Carrier. The USNS Geiger sailed from Pier 7, Oakland Army Terminal at 1730 hours, 5 Nov 65 with the 48th Avn Co (minus) aboard. Throughout the trip, company officers were involved in writing company Standard Operating Procedures to prepare them for operations in Vietnam. The USNS Geiger made one stop-off enroute to RVN at Guam Island and liberty was afforded all personnel from 0900 hours until 1300 hours on 18 Nov 65. The only facility open at the Navy base was a snack bar until the officers of the 48th Avn Co passed the hat and bribed the Naval Officers club bar tender to open the bar at 1030 hours. The enlisted personnel arranged through the Naval Petty Officer's club to have beer and snacks taken to the beach, and the beach party that ensued few will forget.

The next stop was Qui Nhon, RVN where the USNS Geiger tied up for three days, 23-26 Nov, while other units disembarked. All 48th Avn Co personnel remained aboard the USNS Geiger in Qui Nhon harbor. The company spent their first National holiday overseas, enjoying a delicious Thanksgiving Day dinner aboard the ship. Their menu included turkey, mashed potatoes & gravy, candied yams, cranberries, peas & carrots, relishes, minced and pumpkin pie and ice cream served with coffee, milk or tea.

The USNS Geiger departed Qui Nhon harbor at approximately 2400 hours, 25 Nov 65 and anchored in Cam Ranh Bay at approximately 0730 hours 26 Nov 65. Captain Thurmond, OIC of the Rear/Advanced party met the company aboard the USNS Geiger. Captain Thurmond briefed the Commanding Officer, Major Charles H. Drummond Jr on the unit assignment with 10th Avn Bn and duty station at Phan Rang.

The company, shortly after arrival at Cam Ranh Bay, disembarked into LCU's (Landing Craft Utility), which transported them to the beach. All personnel were issued their basic load of ammunition in the rain. Fifteen of the officers boarded three company helicopters which Major Brophy had brought from Vung Tau (see chapter 2) and flew directly to Phan Rang. The remainder of the company boarded 2 1/2 ton trucks from the 10th Transportation Battalion, Cam

Ranh. The trucks were ferried across Cam Rahn Bay and formed a convoy for the trip over National Highway #1 to Phan Rang. An Ol-A Bird Dog flew convoy escort and two UH-1B gunships were on standby at Cam Ranh Bay for purposes of security. The company closed station at Phan Rang at 1900 hours, 26 November 1965.

CHAPTER FOUR: THE REAR PARTY CLOSED OUT FORT BENNING AND BECAME THE COMPANY ADVANCED PARTY

The rear party, composed of Captain James F. Thurmond (OIC), Captain Larue R. Rosengrant, 1LT William T. Ragan, SSG Gilbert McCollough, SSG Delbert L. Hall, SP5 Jimmie H. Ray, and PFC Donald D. Wallace remained at Fort Benning to close out property accounts and to turn over their building to another unit. The rear party were the last 48th Avn Co personnel to depart CONUS, the only members to fly directly to RVN, and the first to arrive in Vietnam. The rear party departed Fort Benning by bus and boarded a Commercial Airlines at Muscogee County Airport, Columbus, Georgia, at 0800 hours on 10 Nov 65. They flew by Commercial Air, to San Francisco International Airport. A bus met them at the airport and took them directly to Travis AFB, California, where they were booked on a Pan American Jet for Saigon, RVN, with stops at Anchorage, Alaska, Tokyo, Japan, and Clark AFB, Philippine Islands. They arrived at Tan Son Nhut Airport, Saigon, RVN at 1300 hours, 13 Nov 65 and were now acting as the advanced party for the main body of the 48th Avn Co.

Shortly after arrival, Captain Thurmond contacted Colonel Jones, CO, 12th Avn Gp in Saigon to report their arrival. 12th Avn Group had no knowledge as to when the 48th Avn Co was scheduled in-country, who they would be assigned to or where their duty station would be. The advanced party moved into Camp Alpha, 90th Repl Bn, Tan Son Nhut AFB, Saigon, and awaited notification of their assignment. On 16 Nov 65, the party received word that the 48th Avn Co would be assigned to the 10th Avn Bn at Dong Ba Thin and they hopped a ride aboard an Air Force C-130 to Cam Ranh Air Force base. Their personal and company equipment, to include classified documents, were off loaded on the runway and the C-130 departed. Captain Thurmond contacted 10th Avn Bn who dispatched a helicopter to Cam Ranh. Captain Thurmond and Lt Ragan flew to Dong Ba Thin to coordinate with the CO, 10th Avn Bn. Captain Rosengrant and the advanced party (minus) remained overnight at Cam Ranh and joined the others on 18 Nov in Dong Ba Thin. Coordination was completed with Lt Col Olney, who informed them that the 48th Avn Co advance party with the aircraft had been in Cam Ranh but had departed for Vung Tau (see chap 2). Lt Col Olney, Captain Thurmond and Lt Ragan, on 17 Nov 65, flew a helicopter to Phan Rang to reconnoiter a location for the 48th Avn Co. Coordination was made with Colonel B M Mattlick, the Air Force Commander, and Colonel Timothy, CO, 1st Bde, 101st Abn Div, and the area they agreed upon was an area approximately five acres in size and located East of the Buu Son airstrip. On the 20th the advanced party convoyed from Dong Ba Thin to Phan Rang in a 2 1/2 ton and 3/4 ton truck they borrowed from the 10th Avn Bn. Passing through the village of Phan Rang they continued straight at Thap Cham where they should have turned right. After realizing their mistake and in the process of turning around, the 2 1/2 ton truck received fire from a sniper. This was the first incident where the 48th Aviation Company received hostile fire. No injuries were sustained and the group continued to the military compound at Phan Rang.

The advanced party encamped with the Air Force, who at the time amounted to an advanced party in Phan Rang with only a few tents erected. The advanced party measured off and staked out the company area. They arranged from the Air Force to have cots, tents and water for the company upon their arrival. They coordinated with the 101st Abn Div (also new in Phan Rang) and a field kitchen, complete with fire unit, pots, and pans, was obtained. Rations were also drawn from the 101st. On 23 Nov 65 Capt Rosengrant arranged a flight from Nha Trang to Saigon to link

up with Major Brophy and the advanced party accompanying the aircraft, and to arrange for three company aircraft to meet the main body in Cam Rahn on the 26th. Captain Thurmond met the company aboard the USNS Geiger in Cam Ranh Bay and briefed the company commander on the new location. Company officers were making bets on whether or not Captain Thurmond would make it up the side of the ship via its rope ladder. It was a struggle but Captain Thurmond made it.

CHAPTER FIVE: 48TH AVN CO (AML) ARRIVES AT PHAN RANG

The 48th Avn Co, upon arrival at Phan Rang on 26 Nov 65, moved into Air Force tents arranged for them by the advanced party. The first three days in Phan Rang, the officers, NCO's and EM all were issued axes, machetes, and other tools and everyone pitched in to attempt to clear the trees and underbrush from the area which was to be their new home. On 30 Nov 65 the 48th Avn Co moved out of the Air Force tents and into their partially cleared area. Company personnel continued to clear the company area and as sufficient space was cleared, aircraft were ferried from Vung Tau at the rate of three per day until all aircraft were relocated to Phan Rang. The first casualty for the 48th in Vietnam was Captain Paul R. Lalumiere Jr when he received a light injury from a machete during the clearing operations. Lt Jack Horne, while working at clearing operations, encountered one of the many poisonous snakes in the area. The company soon employed approximately 200 coolies to get the clearing operation under way. Throughout the first few weeks while the 48th was clearing the land and building their camp the monsoon rains were in full force and they worked, ate, and slept in mud up to their knees. Before getting settled at their new home, the Phan Rang MACV Sector Advisor warned them that a Viet Cong attack was imminent. On 2 Dec 65 the pilots evacuated the aircraft to Dong Ba Thin where they stayed with the 117th and 129th Airmobile companies for two nights. Throughout the remainder of December it became a nightly procedure to evacuate the aircraft to the 101st Airborne Division containment area and the crews billeted with units of the 101st. The early part of December was spent clearing the company area, digging foxholes, erecting tents and some limited flying missions.

On 21 Dec 65 the 48th conducted its first company sized airmobile operation when it administratively lifted A/2/502nd Abn Inf from Phan Rang to the shore of the South China Sea some 15 miles East, and returned to Phan Rang with C/2/502nd Abn Inf. Ten UH-1D's and four UH-1B's (gunships) took part in the exercise.

On 22 December, Major Ralph Broman became Operations Officer.

On 23 December, Major Broman and CWO Geer experienced the first engine failure in Vietnam. They put the ship down in a rice paddy without a scratch and were quickly rescued.

On 27 Dec. 65, twenty-three door gunners were assigned to the 48th Avn Co by the 10th Avn Bn. CWO Temple and WO Fisher departed for Tuy Hoa with a C&C ship to support the 117th Airmobile Company.

On 29 December, the 48th Avn Co completed its first operational combat mission, with the extraction of bodies from a crashed [CH-37] aircraft. The aircraft had been lost in the mountains approximately 16 miles south of Phan Rang. Earlier attempts by another Airmobile Company to rescue the bodies had been driven off by enemy fire. The 2/327th Abn Inf Bn conducted a combat assault in the vicinity of the crash site to secure the area, however, numerous enemy remained. Captain Arthur Moen and 1LT Robert E. Smith had been flying C&C for the 2/327th and volunteered to attempt extraction. They successfully accomplished this difficult mission under extremely hazardous conditions. Both 48th Avn Co pilots received the Air Medal with "V" device

and were the first members of the 48th Avn Co to be decorated for heroism.

Also on 29 Dec, Captain Carl R. Jones, Captain Morris R. Steenson, Captain Donald R. Kelsey, and CWO Dominik L. Guccione departed for Tuy Hoa with two gunships to augment and train with the 117th Avn Co through 6 Jan 66. The first time 48th aircraft received enemy fire was when these crews and 117th pilots were conducting a live fire exercise in a designated free fire area west of Tuy Hoa and while undergoing target practice an enemy sniper within close vicinity of the target fired back at them. There was no damage to either aircraft or crews.

CHAPTER SIX: COMPANY IS DECLARED OPERATIONAL - 1 JAN 66

On 1 Jan 66 the 48th Aviation Company (AML) was declared combat operational by the CO, Major Charles H. Drummond Jr. The company was in-country a total of only 36 days before it was declared combat operational.

At 0045 hours, 1 Jan 66, the 48th Avn Co crews at Tuy Hoa underwent a mortar attack. The Viet Cong landed 21 mortar rounds within the camp. Fortunately no personnel were injured.

The 48th Avn Co received its first aircraft hit from hostile fire on 2 Jan 66. Aircraft #084, flown by Captain Carl Jones received a hit from small arms fire just below the horizontal stabilizer while escorting a medevac helicopter. This occasion, incidentally, happened on Captain Jones' birthday.

After rehearsing for three days, the 48th Avn Co pilots put out the 101st Abn Div LRRP (Long Range Reconnaissance Patrol) in an area 10 miles SE of Phan Rang. The insertion was timed for approximately 15 minutes remaining light. The helicopters orbited 15 minutes after insertion and started back toward home base when the LRRP made an emergency call to the 48th pilots requesting extraction as they were heavily engaged in a fire fight. The 48th Avn Co gunships, led by Major LaVere W. Bindrup, suppressed the enemy fire and the slicks (UH-1D's) extracted the team. This was the first time 48th Avn Co personnel actively engaged the enemy.

4 Jan 66: (Phan Rang) gunships attacked a Viet Cong platoon sighted in the open by the 101st LRRP. After the gunship attack, 48th Avn Co aircraft lifted a platoon of 101st Abn Inf troops to the battle site. The LRRP reported having observed two ox cart loads of bodies being removed after the gunship attack. The official estimate was 12 VC KBA (Killed by Aircraft).

4 Jan 66: (Phan Rang) The company received its TO&E equipment. Repair parts had been in-country but had not been delivered to Phan Rang, prior to this date.

8 Jan 66: Captains Kelsey and Steenson (097), Captain Clemens and CWO Markel (085), 1LT Green and CWO Morris (093) were called to Saigon to reinforce the 155th Avn Co with gunships on Operation Crimp. The operation required 10 Airmobile companies with over 300 aircraft and two complete Infantry Brigades (1st Div and 25th Div) were heli-lifted. A large battle took place on 9 Jan 66. The first LZ in which the 48th Avn Co gun pilots provided pre-strike fires and armed escort had 4 of the 7 gunships severely damaged by hostile fire. The three 48th aircraft were the three not receiving hits. Twelve .50 cal machine guns were captured by the ground troops in this LZ. The 48th gunships escorted troop carrying UH-1D's into a total of three additional LZ's and aircraft were severely damaged from hostile fire in each, but miraculously the 48th again sustained no hits. The crews returned to Phan Rang on the 10th with their first real test of combat flying. The same crews departed the following day again for Tuy Hoa and again to support the

117th Avn Co during Operation Jefferson in conjunction with the ROK (Republic of Korea) Brigade.

9 Jan 66: SO 5, para 19, Hq, 10th Avn Bn, nineteen security personnel were assigned to the 48th Avn Co. Within a week the security personnel totaled 31 and were formed into a security platoon. Their mission was to provide physical security for the 48th Avn Co.

12 Jan 66: At 1300 hours the 48th Avn Co departed Phan Rang for Tuy Hoa with 6 UH-1D's and 3 UH-1B's to reinforce the 129th Avn Co on Operation Jefferson. This became the first sustained support of a combat operation by the 48th Avn Co and this date set off a long and still continuing chain of combat support operations. On 12 Jan the 1st Airlift Platoon departed Phan Rang for Song Mau to support the 2/327th Abn Inf Bn on a combat operation. The first platoon rejoined the company at Tuy Hoa South Airfield. The Service Platoon was split between Tuy Hoa and Phan Rang and the 390th Det (-) remained at Phan Rang as did the administrative section of the company. During this operation aircraft were returned to Phan Rang for PE's and major maintenance. The crews accompanied their aircraft to Phan Rang for PE and were allowed to rest during the time the aircraft underwent maintenance.

CHAPTER SEVEN: OPERATION VAN BUREN/HARRISON: TUY HOA

The 48th Avn Co was in general support of both Operation Van Buren (18 Jan-20 Feb 66) and Operation Harrison (21 Feb - 15 Mar 66) with priority of missions going to the 1st Brigade of the 101st Airborne Division. Missions were received by the 10th Avn Bn at the CSCC (Combat Support Coordination Center) and relayed to the companies. The company was briefed that elements of the 95th PAVN (Peoples Army of Vietnam) Regiment, the 3rd Viet Cong Regiment and local Viet Cong companies were known to be operating north and west of Tuy Hoa. The major friendly units in the area were the 1st Brigade of the 101st Airborne Division, a Republic of Korea Brigade, and the 47th ARVN (Army of the Republic of Vietnam) Regiment. The 48th Avn Co supported all three friendly elements from 18 Jan - 15 Mar 66.

The 48th Avn Co jelled as a fighting team at Tuy Hoa. They fast earned the reputation for rendering timely and professional aviation support to ground troops ranging from simple one ship supply missions to leading multi-company night combat assaults into insecure landing zones.

The 48th Avn Co, remaining in the field on direct combat support operations from 10 Jan - 15 Mar 66, established a new record for the number of days of sustained combat support from a field location by an airmobile company. Statistically the 48th, on their first combat support operations, achieved an impressive record. During this period, the 48th Avn Co led the largest night helicopter assault on record. Thirty six (36) UH-1D's from three companies escorted by twelve (12) gunships. The mission was to lift two battalions of the 1st Bde, 101st Abn Div commencing at 0100 hours to exploit the effects of a B-52 bombing raid. This assault was accomplished by infiltrating a pathfinder team which lighted the landing zone.

On 2 February the 48th Avn Co set another record by lifting the largest number of troops (2400) and cargo (100 tons) into the largest assortment of landing zones (15) in the history of the Vietnam war. This was accomplished with eighteen (18) UH-1D's (six from the 117th Avn Co). The average pilot on that day flew over nine hours.

(10 Jan - 15 Mar 66)

Total hours flown 1,879:30

Total sorties flown 19,524

Total cargo lifted 857 tons

Total passengers carried 15,524

Number of aircraft hit by enemy fire 11

Number of aircraft shot down by enemy fire 2

Number of aircraft destroyed by enemy fire 1

Number of Viet Cong KBA 29 confirmed

8 estimated

Quantity of ammo expended

7.62mm 340,300 rounds

40mm 1,068 rounds

2.75 inch rockets 4,977 rockets

JP-4 fuel consumed 250,619 gallons

Number of crew members wounded 8

The 48th Avn Co returned to Phan Rang from Tuy Hoa and remained at home station from 15 Mar - 11 Apr 66. During this period the company maintained five aircraft with crews in Nha Trang in support of HQ, Field Forces [III]. At home station emphasis was placed on performing maintenance of aircraft vehicles and in improving the living conditions at Phan Rang. During this period the officers constructed an officers club. The club is of frame structure with a concrete floor and corrugated steel roofing. Employees of RMK Construction company rendered invaluable services and materials in building the club. Captain John Jenks was the first appointed club officer and he supervised the construction effort and conducted the necessary correspondence to establish a legal officers open mess.

The command of the 48th Avn Co was temporarily assumed by Major Willis E. Smith from 17-31 March 1966. Major Charles H. Drummond Jr re-assumed command of the 48th Avn Co on 31 March 1966. Major Harry Mck Roper Jr assumed command of the company from Major Drummond on 4 April 1966.

On the 2nd and 3rd of April 1966 the 48th Avn Co provided seven UH-1D slick helicopters and two UH-1B armed helicopter in support of the 161st Airmobile Co who were supporting the 1st Cav Regt (ROK) in operations against two known Viet Cong Battalions operating within a twenty kilometer square northwest of Qui Nhon, RVN. This short operation proved to be one of the hottest engagements the 48th Avn Co had participated in up to that time. Four UH-1D and one

UH-1B helicopters received direct hits. One aircraft returned with over forty entry holes in the airframe caused from a mortar round exploding close to the aircraft. Statistically these nine aircraft completed a big job for a two day period.

Total sorties flown 315

Total troops carried 206

Total cargo lifted 51.9 tons

Total troops medically evacuated 9 U.S.

Total enemy KBA 6

Total hours flight time 34:00

Total ammo expended

7.62mm 3200 rounds

40mm 300 rounds

2.75 inch rockets 8 rockets

CHAPTER EIGHT: THE UNIT CREST AND MOTTO

Shortly after assuming command, Major Roper designed a company crest. The background for the crest is a "Blue Star" bordered in gold, derived from the original and still-in-effect unit call sign, centered inside the Blue Star are the numerals "48" in white letters with black trim. Lettered in red on a white scroll below the Blue Star is the unit motto "SKILL NOT LUCK" also contrived by Major Roper. Upon arrival in country and prior to assuming command of the 48th, Major Roper was repeatedly told of the many successful operations by the newly formed 48th Avn Co, of which most sources contributed their success to pure luck. After but a brief period with the company, Major Roper realized that it was skill, not luck, which accounted for the 48th Avn Co's success and hence the company motto originated. The Blue Star has become a symbol of strong pride among the members of the 48th Avn Co. Each aircraft adorns a Blue Star trimmed in gold on its tail section, and the men in the company proudly wear the Blue Star patch on their right breast pocket. The gun platoon, known by their call sign as the "Jokers" have altered the basic 48th Avn Co crest by placing in green letters the word "Joker" on the white background above the scroll. The members of the 286th Medical Detachment have altered their crest slightly by having embroidered on the white background a red cross with numerals 286 in black just above the red cross.

CHAPTER NINE: OPERATION AUSTIN II

After the short breather in Phan Rang the 48th Avn Co again took to the field, this time they moved South to Phan Thiet, RVN, and again were in general support of the 1st Bde, 101st Abn Div, and in direct support of the 1st Bn, 327th Abn Inf, 1st Bde, 101st Abn Div. There were reported widespread Viet Cong terrorist activities west and north of Phan Thiet. Operation Austin II was conducted in two phases. Phase I (11-19 Apr 66) was conducted to the west of Phan Thiet.

The activity of Phase I, with the exception of two large combat assaults, was primarily in support of small units conducting search and destroy missions. Assaults with from two to five aircraft were made into dispersed confined landing zones. Phase II (20-25 Apr. 66) kicked off with the 48th Avn Co making a night combat assault carrying 425 troops of the 1/327th Abn Bn into three LZ's approximately 40 miles north of Phan Thiet. This operation went on record as the largest night combat assault conducted by an airmobile company in the history of the Vietnam war.

For the remainder of Phase II of Austin II the 48th Avn Co staged its aircraft from a forward base of operations, (SF Camp Luong Son) and during daylight hours remained on immediate standby. As the Infantry troops developed the enemy situation the 48th provided troop lift, re-supply, and armed helicopter support. Statistical results of the 48th Avn Co support of Austin II are as follows:

Total hours flown 767

Total sorties flown 2794

Total cargo lifted 78 tons

Total passengers carried 3946

Total aircraft hit by enemy fire 4

Structures damaged 47

Structures destroyed 66

Total VC KBA (confirmed) 13

Crew members wounded 1

Emergency medical evac 6

Total ammo expended

7.62mm 183,000 rounds

40mm 3,300 rounds

2.75 inch rockets 487 rockets

JP-4 fuel consumed 57,790 gallons

On 24 April 1966, while in general support of Operation Austin II, the 48th Avn Co received a mission of direct support to the 2nd Bn, 44th Inf Regt (ARVN) for a combat assault into an LZ approximately 20 miles south of Phan Thiet. The gunships made a pre-strike of the LZ but drew no fire. Inbound to the LZ aircraft 776, piloted by CWO's William Moore and Tom Paulson, experienced an engine failure. The two pilots expertly autorotated their aircraft without damage to the aircraft or injury to the Vietnamese troops aboard. Following the troop lift a gunship escorting a UH-ID on a resupply mission received four hits. No injuries were sustained by crew

members.

Total sorties flown 114

Total troops carried 122

Total cargo lifted 1 ton

Total hours flown 44:30

Total ammo expended

7.6mm 12,260 rounds

40mm 250 rounds

2.75inch rockets 56 rockets

CHAPTER TEN: OPERATION AUSTIN VI (29 Apr - 18 May 66)

The company, completing Operation Austin II, broke camp and loaded their equipment aboard US Air Force C-130 transports at Phan Thiet airfield and were flown to an airstrip at Nhon Co near the Cambodian border. The air crews loaded their aircraft with personal equipment and were able to RON at Phan Rang enroute to Nhon Co.

The 48th Aviation Company was placed in direct support of the 1/327 th Abn Inf Bn, 1st Bde, 101st Abn Div with additional mission support of general support to the 1st Bde, 101st Abn Div and the 45th Inf Regt (ARVN). An enemy force of unknown size was operating along the Cambodian border utilizing trails to infiltrate personnel and equipment from North Vietnam into South Vietnam. The weather until 1000 hours was generally overcast with ceilings from 100 to 200 feet and 1 mile visibility, lifting from 500 to 1000 feet until 1500 hours and 1800 hours daily. The terrain over which the company operated varied from 1300 MSL to 2300 MSL. The preponderance of the area was covered by heavy jungle vegetation varying in height from 100 to 150 feet. The company established its camp within the perimeter of a newly formed Special Forces Camp. Living conditions were severely crowded due to the lack of space. Newly recruited Montagnard CIDG (Civilian Irregular Defense Group) companies with their families manned the perimeter surrounding the 48th Avn Co.

The 48th Aviation pilots experienced increased difficulty in low level navigation over the dense jungle. It was also discovered that the dense jungle canopies reduced the effectiveness of enemy fire. In bad weather and at night flares proved especially valuable in helping the pilots find Nhon Co airfield.

The first troop lift for the 1/327th Infantry Battalion occurred on 1 May 66. The Bn was lifted into LZ Savannah (YU628465) and the 48th Avn Co provided ammunition, re-supply and troop lift capability from Nhon Co airfield through 9 May 66. During the period 9-16 May 66, the 1/327th Abn Inf Bn operated their base of operations from Bu Gia Map airfield which is WSW of Nhon Co approximately 20 miles. Five UH-1D's and 2 UH-1B's were maintained on strip alert during

the day at Bu Gia Map airfield for resupply and minor troop moves.

Statistical Data

Combat sorties flown 2386

Troops moved 3587 U.S.

600 Non-U.S.

Ammunition expenditures

7.62mm 45,700 rounds

40mm 600 rounds

2.75 inch rockets 232 rockets

Total flight time 854.5 hourS

CHAPTER ELEVEN: STOP OFF AT CHEO REO

Again the 48th Avn Co (AML) packed their gear, struck their tents and loaded their equipment on USAF C-130 pallets for air transport. On 20 May 66 the air crews with their Heuys packed down with personal equipment and tents departed Nhon Co for Phan Rang. The crews were afforded the opportunity of staying 4 days and 3 nights at "home". The remainder of the company stayed at Nhon Co until all unit equipment was loaded aboard C-130 aircraft and they proceeded directly to Cheo Reo, the next base of operations.

The air crews took full advantage of being back in Phan Rang, which by this time was becoming more of a fable than a reality to most Blue Stars. The new officers club, which you recall was constructed by unit personnel as were all other structures claimed by the 48th, was the sight of two rather gay parties. It was the first opportunity for the officers to relax and enjoy their own club.

The company closed Cheo Reo on 24 May and started again the now routine procedure of erecting tents, sand bagging their tents, digging foxholes, setting up latrines and a shower point, erecting mess tents and a kitchen and establishing operations.

The 48th Avn Co was again in support of the 1st Bde, 101st Abn Div. Both units were at Cheo Reo to participate in Operation Trooper which never took place. The 48th's tenure at Cheo Reo was abruptly curtailed by orders to again break camp and move. Due to tactical considerations by higher headquarters the 101st and 10th Avn Bn, parent unit of the 48th Avn Co, were to proceed without delay to Dak To. The 48th was encamped at Cheo Reo only six days (24 - 30 May) and no significant operations were conducted.

CHAPTER TWELVE: DAK TO; REINFORCEMENT OF TOUMORONG;

OPERATION HAWTHORNE (1-20 Jun 66); OPERATION BEAURAGARD (24 Jun - 14 Jul 66)

The 48th Assault Helicopter Company (UH-1) (A) (the new designation for former airmobile companies proposed by Brigadier General Seneff, Commanding General, 1st Aviation Brigade and hence officially adopted) closed at Dak To on 30 May 1966. Dak To is located approximately 50 miles north of Kontum City in the Vietnamese Central Highlands. The 48th established their camp at Dak To #1 airstrip which is an abandoned airstrip approximately 5 KM East of the active Dak To airfield, also the sight of an American Special Forces Camp. Dak To #1 was reverently referred to as "Old Dak To". Old Dak To had a field elevation of approximately 2100 feet MSL and was situated in the spansive Dak To Valley. The surrounding countryside was mountainous with peaks varying from 3000 to 6000 feet MSL. Numerous streams flowed in the valleys providing many areas suitable for landing sights. The mountainous terrain was covered with heavy forest and dense jungle and offered very few landing zones. The weather was generally mild with the evenings quite cool. Early mornings it was common to be weathered in due to fog which generally rose to a ceiling of 1000 feet by 0900 hours. During midday there normally existed a scattered cloud layer from 4000 to 6000 feet MSL. There were occasional thunder showers in mid-afternoon, but the soil had good drainage and there was no real problem with mud.

The company was forewarned that they could expect to remain from five to six months at Dak To. This was all it required for the company to pull together and create a very livable camp. Throughout the area their existed numerous Montagnard tribes and several of these indigenous personnel were employed as KP's and workers. Several impressive hootches were constructed. One constructed by Captain Vincent Ripoll and First Lieutenant Ragan resembled more a Swiss Chalet than an Army hex tent. The majors, with two tents joined , had a porch with overhead canopy (parachute) and several large banana trees adorning their front yard. The supporting artillery units found the 48th Blue Stars a continuous pest as they begged, borrowed and stole 105mm ammo boxes. With the boxes they built wood floors for the mess tents and operations tent and within two weeks nearly all individual tents included wooden floors.

Since Dak To was nearly a three hour flight back to Phang Rang it was no longer practical to perform PE's and major maintenance from home base. For this reason the 390th Trans Det and the rear echelon of the company maintenance section packed up and joined the ubiquitous Blue Stars. The 390th set up operations at Kontum, just North of the local MACV compound. Aircraft were either evacuated or flown to Kontum when major maintenance was required.

Operationally the company was tasked with missions immediately. The company which had been together for nine months and had matured as a fighting unit was called on to perform perhaps their most demanding tasks.

The 24th North Vietnamese Regiment had been identified and was operating in the area just north of Dak To. The 104th Vietnamese Regional Force Company, manning an isolated outpost at Toumorong (coord ZB 138360) had been harassed by enemy fire since the end of April, and for the past six days had been under siege. The immediate enemy force estimated as two reinforced North Vietnamese companies were subjecting the Toumorong outpost to motor bombardment and had the ARVN's pinned down by heavy (12.7mm) machine gun fire from five well camouflaged and fortified positions. The Vietnamese outpost was near complete exhaustion of supplies and the danger of being overrun was imminent.

On 1 Jun 66 the 48th Assault Helicopter Company received from the 10th Aviation Combat Battalion the mission of reinforcing the Toumorong outpost with 64 Vietnamese Rangers staging at Kontum.

A reconnaissance flight of two armed UH-1B's and the C&C (Command & Control) aircraft were dispatched to Toumorong to ascertain the enemy's proximity, possible landing zones, flight routes and to draw enemy fire to confirm intelligence reports. By high recon it was determined that the best flight route would be along the river located in a valley NE of the finger of the ridge line where the beleaguered Vietnamese outpost was located. During low reconnaissance the two armed ships drew intense machine gun fire from two locations on a hill to the North overlooking the camp. The armed aircraft conducted recon by fire for approximately five minutes. They ascertained that the enemy was well dug in, with continuous observation and fields of fire of the only available LZ which was within the confines of the outpost proper.

Eight UH-1D's, five UH-1B gunships and 1 C&C ship took part in lifting the 64 Vietnamese Rangers and 2000 pounds of supplies into Toumorong outpost. The troops were picked up at Kontum and ferried North in staggered trail, flights of two with a 15 second interval between flights. Four sorties of A1-E fighter aircraft failed to silence the enemy's machine guns. The five UH-1B's preceded the flight by five minutes and conducted an intense pre-strike and then formed on the inbound UH-1D's and escorted them into the 4500 foot pinnacle landing zone, attempting to divert the enemy fire from the troop laden ships and to provide suppressive fire. During the approach into the landing zone and in the LZ the helicopters were under heavy fire. The combat assault was successfully completed, but one UH-1D and one UH-1B had sustained damage from hostile fire.

The following morning on 2 Jun 66, the 48th AHC received the mission of delivering 1200 pounds of cargo and a signal relay team of 13 men from the 101st Airborne Division who were to become an important communications link for Operation Hawthorne which was just kicking off. Again throughout the night the Toumorong outpost had been under heavy attack. Three UH-1B's and five UH-1D's accomplished the mission. As the armed helicopters began striking the enemy positions the first flight started their approach under intense hostile fire. The pilot of the lead aircraft, WO Jimmie Nunn, was hit by enemy fire seconds after landing in the landing zone. The other aircraft continued to land in spite of heavy enemy fire. When the two aircraft loaded with cargo landed the ground troops recently landed were pinned down. The 48th AHC crew chiefs and gunners displayed exceptional bravery when they left their machine gun stations and unloaded the 1200 pounds of critically needed cargo. The mission was successfully accomplished but five aircraft participating in the lift received damage by hostile fire. One UH-1B received major damage and the UH-1D's received numerous hits throughout the cabin sections and tail booms. The pilot, WO Nunn, was wounded in the right forearm and evacuated to the field hospital at Pleiku. WO Nunn was also hit in his chest protector, which saved his life. Crew chief, SP5 Harlan H. Kohnert was wounded by shrapnel on the back of both hands. He was treated at the 48th AHC dispensary and returned to duty.

These heroic actions by the crews of the 48th AHC, who displayed exceptional devotion to duty and professional skill, were responsible for the successful reinforcement of the besieged Toumorong outpost on 1 Jun 66 and for emplacing an important signal relay team the following day.

Throughout Operation Hawthorne, which commenced on 1 Jun 66, the 48th AHC was in general support of the 1st Bde, 101st Abn Div with priority of mission support to the 1/327th Abn Inf Bn. Operation Hawthorne was a highly successful operation in which the 101st Airborne, later reinforced by elements of the 1st Air Cavalry Division, encircled an estimated 1200 North Vietnamese Regular troops. American B-52 long range bombers unloaded 432 tons of 500 and 1000 pound bombs in what military spokesmen called "one of the largest" bombings of the war. The bomb raid was on target and enemy casualties mounted into the hundreds. The 48th AHC, as

the statistical analysis points out (below), played a large part in the successful exploitation of the bombing. Individual acts of heroism were numerous and too large a number for these pages. Several night missions were conducted and most of these of an emergency nature such as medical evacuations and resupply of food, water, and ammunition. On one occasion on 7 Jun, three Joker aircraft (UH-1B) returning from an escort mission intercepted an urgent radio call from "B" Battery, 1/320th Artillery. They were being overrun, in fact the enemy had already taken one gun position. The Jokers made six gun runs each with 2.75 inch rockets, 40mm grenades, and 7.62mm machine guns and through exceptionally close air-to-ground support stymied the enemy attack long enough to allow the artillerymen to regroup and successfully counter attack. On 10 Jun 66 a Marine helicopter crashed into the mountain North of the 48th AHC camp. Captain Milton J. Sands Jr., Flight Surgeon, 48th AHC, hearing that one of the pilots had a possible broken back volunteered to go to the sight where he climbed down a rope from a hovering helicopter to the injured aviator. Doc Sands, in an outstanding display of courage and professional ability was credited with saving the lives of four seriously injured men.

Statistical Data: Operation Hawthorne

Total hours flown 787.1

Total sorties 3247

Number combat assault sorties 1183

Total cargo hauled (Tons) 73.1

Total passengers carried 4322

Aircraft hit by enemy fire 10

Aircraft shot down 0

Average aircraft availability 86.5%

UH-1B 87.0%

UH-1D 86.0%

Structures damaged 16

Structures destroyed 7

VC KBA 36 (body count)

5 (est)

Crew members wounded

pilots pilots 1

crew chiefs 2

gunners 0

Emergency medical evacuation 62

Ammunition expended

7.62mm 191,640 rounds

40 mm 3,155 rounds

2.75 inch rockets 471

JP-4 fuel consumed 61,400 gallons

Aircraft accidents or incidents 0

On 14 Jun 66 the first edition of the 48th AHC Blue Star was printed. Realizing the value of having a unit newspaper both for members of the company and as a means of keeping the folks back home advised of our whereabouts and accomplishments, Major Roper, with the support of other field leaders came up with ideas for a unit paper. Captain James I. McDowell was assigned with the mission of seeing it through. The paper was greeted with overwhelming success and many a budding writer was discovered among company personnel.

Operation Beauragard (24 Jun to 14 Jul 66) found the 48th AHC again in general support of the 1st Bde, 101st Abn Div, and in direct support of the 1/327th Abn Inf Bn. The purpose of the operation was to exploit the success of Operation Hawthorne. It was suspected that the remnants of the battered 24th North Vietnamese Regiment would attempt to escape to the west into Cambodia and Laos. The size of the remaining enemy force was unknown. Operation Beauragard took place in the valley North-west of Dak To. Sporadic contact was made throughout the operation but significant contact with a large enemy force was never accomplished. The 48th AHC continued their normal support of C&C aircraft, resupply missions, medical evacuations and combat assaults, carrying troops to and from the battle field in support of the 101st Airborne Division. In addition they accomplished numerous missions in support of ARVN forces and American Special Forces throughout the tactical zone.

Statistical Data: Operation Beauragard

Total hours flown 948.7

Total sorties flown 3770

Total combat assault sorties 1264

Total cargo hauled (tons) 74.3

Total passengers carried 4602

Aircraft hit by enemy fire 0

Aircraft shot down by enemy fire 0

Average aircraft availability 91%

UH-1B 88%

UH-1D 94%

Structures damaged 37

Structures destroyed 7

VC KBA 1

Crew members wounded

pilots 1

crew chiefs 1

Emergency medical evacuations 21

Ammunition expended

7.62mm 157,880 rounds

40mm 2,091 rounds

2.75 inch rockets 345

Aircraft accidents and incidents

UH-1D (accident) 1

UH-1B (incident) 1

Far short of the 5 to 6 months reported for the 48th AHC's duration at Dak To, it received its travel orders and it was on the move again. The aircrews departed Dak To on 15 July 1996 and again had a couple of days at Phan Rang. The rear party of 1 UH-1D and 2 UH-1B's remained at Dak To with the rear echelon of the 1st Brigade, 101st Airborne Division, and then rejoined the company at Tuy Hoa. The remainder of the company loaded vehicles and equipment aboard USAF C-130 aircraft on 17 July and departed for Tuy Hoa.

Due to security considerations this unit history will be concluded at this point. The 48th AHC at Tuy Hoa participated in Operation John Paul Jones (20 Jul 66 to 4 Sep 66) and is now participating in Operation [nnnward] again in general support of the 1st Bde, 101st Abn Div.

At this writing the 48th AHC has 18 aviators of the original 55 aviators that accompanied the unit to Vietnam. All of these personnel will be rotating by 4 Nov 66. The company is presently undergoing reorganization with the remaining personnel and new personnel arriving daily.

Command of the 48th Assault Helicopter Company (UH-1) (A) changed from Major Harry Mck

Roper Jr. to Major Joel J. Williams on 26 September 1966.

Approved By

JOEL J. WILLIAMS

Major, Infantry

Commanding

**CHAPTER THIRTEEN: SONGS AND
POEMS WRITTEN AND SUNG BY
BLUE STARS**

- 1. A Chopper Pilot's Day**
- 2. A Message From My Heart**
- 3. American Fighting Man**
- 4. Army Aviation**
- 5. Ballad of the Gunners**
- 6. Blue Stars**
- 7. Chopper Jockey**
- 8. Green Flight Pay**
- 9. Gunship on my Tail**
- 10. Have Chopper - Will Hover**
- 11. Huey - Flying Man**
- 12. In Our Own Little World**
- 13. Ol' Phan Rang**
- 14. Phan Rang Tower**
- 15. Red Hot Pilot**

16. Short Timer's Blues

17. Sixteen Hours

18. Sky King

19. The Best Don't Play, They Mean Business

20. The 48th

21. The Joker's Song

22. The Medic

23. Ton That (Royal Family)

24. Victor Charlie

25. When My Tour's All Done This Fall

-

A CHOPPER PILOT'S DAY

By: Capt Jack Horne

CWO Bill Moore

In the early morning hours

Before the sun is bright

You can hear the turbines turning

as the choppers lift for flight.

A sleepless night is over

The pilots on their way

To face the fears and danger

Of a chopper pilot's day.

CHORUS:

A chopper pilot's day my boys

A chopper pilot's day

We face the fear and danger

Of a chopper pilot's day.

The VC will be hiding

For they know so very well

Should a gunship pilot spot them

He'll blast their soul to hell.

The smell of battle fills the air

The landing zone is near

The flight turns on it's final leg

No place for cowards here.

CHORUS

Machine guns chatter and rockets flash

An awesome sound and sight

But a welcomed one for us it is

For it causes Charlie's fright.

Our choppers settle on no-man's -land

And now our troops depart

Charging into battle

To win, in each man's heart.

CHORUS

An extra second on the ground

Could cost a pilot's life

And leave a tearful mother

Or a very lonely wife.

We clear the ground above the trees

There comes a blinding flash

On our right a ship is hit

We watch the awful crash.

CHORUS

A gunship comes onto the scene

To cover the crew's escape

A slick ship lands to pick them up

We pray they're not too late.

Then through the smoke we see them rise

Into the morning sky

A lucky crew is on that ship

T'was not their day to die.

CHORUS

All crews are now accounted for

We hear our leader say

We breathe a sigh, "We made it, through a chopper pilot's day."

BLUE STARS

By: 1LT Ronald K. Damon

(Tune - Sky Ball Mail)

There she flies-look at her go

She's a 48th-a sight to behold

Flying through the sky all day

Take a warning and don't get in her way.

A group of pilots-each one a man

He knows his job-like the palm of his hand

Name the job-and they'll do it great

They're the Blue Stars-from the 48th.

They've got a guncrew-that just won't quit

Their blazing rockets-their guns do spit

Name the place-and point it out

And the Jokers will wipe it off the map.

Hit an LZ late at night

No mistakes-do it right

Tracers burning-flares so bright

Have no fear - Blue Stars are out tonight.

TON THAT (Royal Family)

By: 1LT Ronald K. Damron

(Tune - New York Girls)

From California I traveled

Cross waters far and wide

And nary a person did I know

Nor what ahead did lie

Traveled for a day or so

My home from me grew you

And then before two days had passed

I fell in Vietnam.

CHORUS:

Singing Mamasan chews beetlenut

Babysan no clothes

Papasan's a VC

But you ain't supposed know

You can tell them one and all

For Charlie is their names

And Mamasan and Babysan

Like Papasan Same Same.

Papasan works in the field

Harvesting the rice

Waves at choppers overhead

Papasan's so nice

But just forget and turn your back

And fly your chopper low

And Papasan will shoot you down

With his M-1 hoe.

CHORUS

You go to the market place

To spend your hard earned P's

And the people in the market

They say come from me

They say since you American

And you so very nice

They'll sell you anything you want

At only twice the price.

CHORUS

The pretty girls in Saigon

Will try and lead you on

You buy they tea

They hold your hand

But there's just one thing wrong

When you say you are fini

And you have no more pay

They say go home American

You wasted my whole day.

CHORUS

Listen to me people

And if you have your doubts

I can tell you everything

I know what it's about

When Papasan and Mamasan

Try and take you in

Just say I really like you

But I think you're number 10.

CHORUS

BALLAD OF THE GUNNERS

By: Sgt Lionel T. Wallace

(Tune - Green Berets)

We're chopper gunners of the forty eight

Always in the shooting and never late

Mighty handy with a sixty-gun

Sometimes there's glory but it's never fun.

Armor vests upon our chests

With machine guns and rockets were the best

About our shooting we can brag

Because each man has been a "Laig".

We got a letter from Ho Chi Minh

Wanted to know if we thought we'd win

Our answer to him was mighty sweet

Went out and killed 200 of his "elite".

Armor vests upon our chests

with machine guns and rockets we're. the best

One of our gunners went down today

Old Charlie will have a lot of hell to pay.

For some we hear there is a test

But as chopper gunners we're the best

And if we go down in flames some night

Our guns will rattle till the end of flight.

Armor vests upon our chests

with machine guns and rockets we're the best

One of gunners went down from 500 today

Came crawling in that night, said everythings OK!

Back at home his sweetheart waits

But her gunner soldier has met his fate

He just re-upped, specialist stripes he got

And he's still that old brain pot.

Armor vest upon our chests

With machine gun rockets we're the best

You can tell old Charlie that we're here to stay

Or they'll send us back D.O.A..

-

GATHER AT THE RIVER

Taken from one of CWO James McCartt's

"Sermons on the Beach"

Gather around me brothers, and tonight I'm gonna preach to you about the greatest sin - the greatest evil - and the greatest home wrecker that this ol' world has ever known! Yes tonight I'm gonna speak that topic - DRINK! Do you realize my friend that alcohol dullens your brain and makes you do things that you would never do if you were sober? Do you realize that alcohol will tear your body gradually apart and have you looking twice your actual age? Do you furthermore realize that alcohol will break up your home, cause your wife to leave you, and your children to despise you? Do you know that it can bring you personal, financial, as well as other worries and headaches?

My friend! Listen to me! Stop! Stop right now! Give up your drink and throw that glass away! Cast all thoughts of it aside and start anew this very moment!

My friend -- If I owned all the beer in Phan Rang - I would pour it into the river! If I owned all the whiskey in Vietnam - I would pour it into the river! If I owned all the Scotch and Sodas in the United States - I would pour them into the river! If I owned all the liquor in this whole wide world - I would pour it into the river!

Now will the congregation please stand as we sing --- "Shall We Gather at the River"!

CHORUS:

Shall we gather at the river

The beautiful river, the beautiful river

Gather with the Saints at the river

That flows by the throne of God.

RED HOT PILOT

By: Capt Donald R. Kelsey

(Tune - Long Tall Texan)

Well I'm a red hot pilot, I fly an HU1B

(He's a pilot, flies an HU1B)

(He's a pilot, flies an HU1B)

When people come my way

They look at me and say

U-Rah U-Rah is that your HU1B?

Well I fly through the jungle kinda low and slow

Keepin' old Charlie way down in his hole

When he hears me coming well he knows darn well

If I see him I'll blast his soul into hell.

For I'm a red hot pilot, I fly a big iron bird

(He's a pilot, flies a big iron bird)

For I'm a red hot pilot, I fly a big iron bird

(He's a pilot, flies a big iron bird)

When people come my way

They look at me and say

U-Rah U-Rah is that your bird?

Well I fly so low I knock the limbs of the trees

Keeping old Charlie right down on his knees

When he hears me coming he jumps right in the grass

And he hides in his hole until I go home for gas.

Well I'm a red hot pilot, I'm the scourge of the sky

(He's a pilot, he's the scourge of the sky)

Well I'm a red hot pilot, I'm the scourge of the sky

(He's a pilot, he's the scourge of the sky)

When people come my way

They look at me and say

My-O-My is you the scourge?

-

THE JOKER SONG

By: SP5 Larry Ephan

(Tune - Battle of New Orleans)

CHORUS:

We fired our guns and the VC started dying

There wasn't as many as there was a while ago

We fired once more and they began to run

Down in a tunnel up to Ho Chi Minh's door.

Ol' Major Jones said we'll catch 'em by surprise

We won't fire our guns till we see where they lie

Then we'll swoop in low and let our rockets go

Right down on Victor Charlie's own front door.

CHORUS

Well, they ran in the bush and they ran in the bamboo's

They ran in the tunnels where our rockets couldn't go

They ran so fast that the guns couldn't catch 'em

Down in a tunnel up to Ho Chi Minh's door.

Ol' Victor Charlie we caught him in a nest

When we got through shooting the place was a mess

When the Jokers go on a shooting spree like this

You know darn well that we hardly ever miss.

CHORUS

Well, we fired our guns and the tracers started burning

We fired at Charlie who was waiting down below

We fired once more and they began to run

Down in a tunnel up to Ho Chi Minh's door.

Guts and guns are the Jokers biggest pride

Our only biggest problem is to shoot 'em in the eye

When our ammo runs out and fuel gets low

We head back to Tuy Hoa and get some more.

CHORUS

We fired our guns and the VC started dying
There wasn't as many as there was awhile ago
We fired once more and they began to run
Down in a tunnel up to Ho Chi Minh's door.

Jokers 1 & 2 with 3 & 4 there's 5, 8 & 10 set to go
with our turbines a singing and engines at its best
we pull collective pitch while the sun began to set.

CHORUS

Once we were all up really got flying
We went to the area were Charlie was before
All the Victor Charlie's that a ran into hiding
Have swore not to tangle with the Jokers anymore.

THE BEST DON'T PLAY, THEY MEAN BUSINESS

By: SP5 Orville L. Stover

Victor Charlie at Ol' Dak To
Thought he was smart but he didn't know
That there were Jokers just standing by
Always ready to go and fly
Now they have guts and they have guns
And they will put Charlie on the run.

The first Platoon, now they don't care
They are too scared to go anywhere

The second platoon is not too bad
But when they must go they all look sad
The Joker Platoon, they are the best
When they go out they put Charlie to rest
We're sorry about that but we must say
When we have a mission we just don't play.

-

IN OUR OWN LITTLE WORLD

By: The 48th

(Tune - Henry the 8th)

I'm Archie the Harrell I am, I am
I'm Archie the Harrell I am, I am
Called for a flare the other night
Gosh Almighty what a terrible sight
Now I see the Airfield - Airfield?
Looks so funny upside down
I'm an all weather pilot Archie
Archie the Harrell I am.

I'm little Jack Horne I am, I am
I'm little Jack Horne I am, I am
I run the mess hall around this place
Gosh Almighty what a terrible disgrace
I don't eat in the mess - mess Hall?
Wouldn't eat there to save my life

I'm a cook's supervisor - Horne

Little Jack Horne I am.

I'm John the Jenks I am, I am

I'm John the Jenks I am, I am

Went for a flight the other day

Somehow I seem to have lost my way

And now I'm sitting in Song Be - Song Be?

Forgot to turn my switches to start

And now I'm using my checklist

John the Jenks I am.

I'm Cambodia Jones I am, I am

I'm Cambodia Jones I am, I am

Went for a flight the other day

They tried to tell me that I lost my way

But I know where I am, I am

Never been lost in my life

I'm map reading pilot Jones

Cambodia Jones I am.

I'm Fixit 6 I am, I am

I'm Fixit 6 I am, I am

I fix airplanes for my pay

One just crashed the other day

And now I must recover it - recover it?

Wouldn't go out there to save my life

I'll leave it there in the jungle

Fixit 6 I am.

SKY KING

By: Capt Kris Kristofferson

(Tune - Big Bad John)

Every morning at the line you should see him arrive

About 5 foot 2 and weighted 185

Kinda narrow at the shoulder

And broad at the hips

Everybody knew he didn't give a darn, Sky King

Sky King, Sky King --- Short fat Sky.

Some say Sky was born in New Orleans

Where he put himself a rotor on a sewing machine

Cut his teeth on a collective pitch

Ol' Sky was a flying son of a gun, Sky King.

Sky King, Sky King --- Short fat Sky.

Then came the day at stagefield four

When his engine quite and wouldn't run anymore

Brave men sighed and hearts beat fast

Everybody thought he'd breathed his last

Except Sky

Sky King, Sky King --- Short fat Sky.

He just pushed the old pitch right down to the floor

But the damn rotor blade wouldn't turn anymore

So his rear puckered up and with a terrible sound

He just sucked the old chopper right off the ground, Sky King

Sky King, Sky King --- Short fat Sky.

Now the ship wasn't hurt but it took half the class

To get the seat cover out of Sky King's rear, Sky King.

They never reopened that worthless strip

Just put a marble stand on top of it

On that stand these words are seen

There ain't no butt that can pucker

Like ol' Sky King.

PHAN RANG TOWER

By: Capt Kris Kristofferson

Hello Phan Rang Tower this is Blue Star 851

I'm 5 miles from your airfield and my fuel is almost gone

My engine she's a coughing and my tack needles have split

You better call your crash crew out this damn thing's gonna quit.

Hello Blue Star 851, this is Phan Rang tower

We can't call our crash crew out this is their coffee hour

And we had just as soon you didn't land here for awhile

Because our visibility is not a half a mile.

Hello Phan Rang Tower this is Blue Star 851

I'd love to put this landing off but that just can't be done

My engine's belching fire and I'm run out of gas

I've got to set this chopper down before

I have a crash.

This is Phan Rang tower calling Blue Star 851

We'd like to know what kind of flight you are on

Our Operation's officer says you have not been cleared

You'll be grounded thirty days if you land that chopper here.

Hello Phan Rang Tower this is Blue Star 851

I'm up in pilot's heaven and my flying days are done

Tell my old commander that I'm sorry that I crashed

Tell your Operations Officer that he can kiss my ____!

THE MEDIC

By: Sgt Lionel T. Wallace

We have a little tent sitting in the sand

We call ourselves the medic clan

With pills in a bottle and syringes in our hand

Ain't a darn thing we're afraid of in this land

"Oh Big Bad Medic".

We canned a cat in the other day

Didn't seem like the pearly gates were far away

We threw him on a stretcher, pulled down his pants

Then stuck him in the rear and he got up and danced.

We sit around at night drinking alcohol

And throwing syringes at our little tent walls

Staying in practice so we don't miss

We stick them with a needle but they get no kiss.

We got a Doc, he's pretty straight

For weekends he's gonna get us a Ford V-8

Gonna load it with mamasans and head for the hills

Disease! We've got the market cornered on pills.

Went to the latrine and looked on the wall

Was a big sign "Unsanitary for all"

I knew it was put there by the medic clan

So I went out yelling "Lord help me man".

VICTOR CHARLIE

By: Unknown

(Tune - Rock of Ages)

Victor Charlie at Pleimi

Threw a hand grenade at me

So I caught it in my palm.

Threw it back, and he was gone

Victor Charlie at Pleimi

Thanks a lot you S.O.B.

GREEN FLIGHT PAY

By: Unknown

(Tune - Green Beret)

Silver wings upon my chest

I fly my chopper above the best

I can make more dough that way

But I can't wear no Green Beret.

Tennis shoes upon his feet

Some people call him sneaky Pete

He sneaks around the woods all day

wearing that funny Green Beret.

Its no jungle floor for me

I've seen a rubber tree

1000 men must take the test

While I fly home and take a rest.

And while I fly my chopper home

And leave him out there all alone

That is where Green Berets belong

Out in the jungle writing songs.

And when my little boy is grown

Don't leave him out there all alone

Just let him fly and give pay

Cause he can't spend no Green Beret.

And when my little boy is old

His silver wings all lined with gold

He then will wear a Green Beret

In the big parade on St. Patrick's Day.

-

CHOPPER JOCKEY

By: 1LT Ronald K. Damron

(Tune - 16 tons)

Some people say a man is made out of rock

But a pilot ain't nothin' but a flying jock

Flies his chopper all the day

Sings his songs and saves his pay.

CHORUS:

You fly 16 hours-and what do you get

One sore rear and a pound of sweat.

I awoke one morning when the sun didn't shine

Major Radford said-men don't ever mind

Cause where you're going you won't need a light

The name of the mission is suicide.

CHORUS

Now we're not scared-for we're still asleep

But Major Roper begins to speak

Said if you go down-here's what to do

Don't call me-I'll call you.

CHORUS

We start our choppers and head for the sky

Don't use lights unless you wanta die

Rotors hitting-people start to scream

I close my eyes and hope it's a dream.

CHORUS

Intelligence says it's a big LZ

You can land 40 ships in a "V"

But after we get there we here the same line

"Better try landing one at a time."

CHORUS

-

ARMY AVIATION

By: 1LT Ronald K. Damron

This world's a free world

The sky is our goal

Lift your eyes up to the heavens

The Army's on the go.

CHORUS:

Army aviation-flying above the best

Army aviation-flies and leaves the rest

Never a job too big

Never one too small

Army Aviators

Qualified to do them all.

Any time - day or night

Whether clouds or heavy rain

They can do the job for you

That's the way our men are trained.

CHORUS

We've got the big ones-got some little ones too

Choppers, fixed wing - you just name it -

Any that you could choose.

We've passed the big test

Now we're in full stride

Part of the greatest Army

And serving it with pride.

-

WHEN MY TOUR'S ALL DONE THIS FALL

By: Capt Donald R. Kelsey

(Tune - When my works all done this fall)

A group of jolly pilots discussing plans at ease

Says one I'll tell you something boys

If you will listen please.

I'm a chopper pilot and now I'm dressed in rags

I used to be a tough one boys

And go on great big jags.

But I have got a home boys, and a good one you all know

Although I haven't seen it

Since long, long, long, ago.

I'm going home to Dixie once more to see them all

I'm going to see my wife and kids

When my tour's all done this fall.

That very night this pilot went out to fly some guard

The night was dark and cloudy

And stormin' very hard.

The VC they got surprised and ran in wild stampede

This pilot tried to shoot them down

While flying at full speed.

His engine though it failed him, his chopper it did fall

That boy won't see his wife and kids

When his tour's all done this fall.

His body was so mangled the boys all thought him dead

They picked him up real gently

And laid him on his bed.

He opened his blue eyes and looking all around

He beckoned for his partners

To sit down on the ground.

George you take my helmet and Bill can have my bed

And Jim you take my pistol

After I am dead.

But think of me kindly when you look upon them all

For I'll not see my wife and kids

When my tour's all done this fall.

-

THE 48TH

BY: The 3rd (Guts & Guns) Platoon

Born at Fort Benning on 5 July

The year was 1965.

They had no choppers but they didn't care

If they ever got alerted they would go anywhere.

Then one day the order came down

To go to Vietnam and put Charlie under ground.

They sailed from California one bright November day

And set their feet upon the sand at the seaport Cam Ranh Bay.

**They climbed up on the Army trucks and everybody sang
We're here to whip on Charlie let's start at old Phan Rang.**

**They finally got their choppers
It sure did take a while
They headed out for Tuy Hoa, all had a great big smile.**

**They left their mark on Tuy Hoa and moved to Phan Thiet
They put the hurt on Charlie, but they were not finished yet.**

**At Nohn Co and Cheo Reo everything was slow
So they all picked up their bags and moved to old Dak To.**

**They finally got their camp set up,
They worked into the night
Charlie knew they had moved in,
But Charlie was scared to come and fight.**

**Operations got the mission and the CO yelled come on
We finally found old Charlie, he's hid in Toumorong.**

**They pulled pitch on the choppers, they never have been late
What Charlie didn't know, it was the mighty 48th.**

-

SIXTEEN HOURS

By: SP5 Thomas Rhodes

SP4 Paul Jagla

(Tune - 16 tons)

I woke up one morning when the sun didn't shine

I picked up my tool box and I walked to the line

My tail boom was sagging, engine oil needs filled

If Charlie don't get you then this chopper will.

You fly 16 hours and what do you get

Another CA and we're not through yet

Intermediate Inspection and the DI is due

Crank her up, we have a mission for you.

Turbines roaring, blades spinning fast

783 has a full load of gas

Off on the first mission of this long day

Sundown looks a long time away.

You fly 16 hours and what do you get

Another CA and you're not through yet

We just came in, so what do we do

We pull 9 hours of guard duty too.

Gunner and crew chief standing by

Briefing is over and we're ready to fly

Gripping 'bout the chopper and the gunner's job too

Seems that the pilots have nothing to do.

**You fly 16 hours and what do you get
Another darn job and you're not through yet
Bullets in the plane and the seat on our pants
Bullets in the fuel tank so we're out of gas.
Now the weather was stormy and the sky was black
Ole 783 ought to be back
St. Peter don't you call us cause we can't come
We're in this weather on another milk run.
You fly 16 hours and what do you get
Another tail chewin' and he's not through yet
The pilots are off in a day dream
But crew chief and gunner are stuck on the thing.**

AMERICAN FIGHTING MAN

By: Members of the 48th

**I'm an American fighting man
I serve my country where I can
And every place there's trouble is my home
Don't know where I'll be tomorrow
Maybe joy and maybe sorrow
I'm a rolling stone.**

CHORUS:

**Hear my plea, hear my destiny
A calling me to travel on
I know when I die that I won't be at home.**

I'll not surrender of my own free will

I will stay and fight until

The last breath leaves my body cold and still

I've been here and I've been there

Well I've been damn near everywhere

And I learn more the further I go.

If by chance I'm overwhelmed

I'll keep on fighting from a prison cell

and let my captors know that I'll resist

Clean escape will be my goal

And I will never sell my soul

To those who'd take the freedom of a man.

If I'm questioned I will tell them

Nothing least I roast in hell

I know my friends can depend on me

Enemy interrogators ask me questions without answers

But from me they'll never learn.

I will never forget that I

Am an American fighting man

And I will give my life for my home

I may live or I may die

But I know God will show me why

My folks at home may have to cry.

GUNSHIP ON
MY TAIL

By: Capt Donald R. Kelsey

(Tune - Tiger on my Tail)

**I've got a gunship on my tail its plain to see
And I won't be much when he gets through with me
I'm losing weight and turning kind of pale
It looks like I've got a gunship on my tail.
Everyday he chases me across that jungle floor
There just ain't no safe place anymore
Then at night the Mohawks come with SLAR and infrared
Sometimes I just wish that I were dead.
The other day we slipped upon their artillery
We were set to gun those redlegs down
Then with guns ablazing they came out of the sky
And all around men began to die.
We were set to overrun a place called Toumorong
Thought we had it made but we were wrong
At the crucial moment the gunships came on in
A raising hell and spoiled our plans again.
Man I hate those gunships more than anything around
Thought I would try and shoot one down
I cracked down on the leadship but his wingman came around
And sent me to the happy hunting ground**

HUEY FLYING MAN

By: 1 LT Ronald K. Damron

(Tune - Truck Driving Man)

Well I hop aboard my old chopper

And then like a flash I'm gone

I get that old Huey a rolling

I'll be on my to fight the Cong.

CHORUS:

Well if you pour me another cup of coffee

For it is the best in the land

Then I'll crank my old Huey and get moving

For I'm a chopper flying man.

Had a briefing just this morning

Said they had Charlie on the run

It's up to the Blue Star chopper pilots

To make sure Charlie's work is done.

CHORUS

The Jokers are cranked and a raring

To clear a path for the slicks

Their rockets thundering into mountains

I bet old Charlie's getting sick.

CHORUS

The slicks are coming up on final

Formation packed in so tight

Jokers a flying on the flanks

Charlie's gonna bite the dust tonight.

CHORUS

The slicks have dropped off their pad

Pulling pitch and leaving the LZ

Jokers make the final pass

Another mission now complete.

CHORUS

-

HAVE CHOPPER - WILL HOVER

By: 1 LT Ronald K. Damron

CHORUS:

We travel through the sky

We travel through the night

Any place anywhere

Just name it - that's our life

We're the men from the greatest state

We all come from the 48th.

We fly choppers - that's our life

We do our job but never gripe

We take the good along with the bad

But the good is something that we ain't had.

CHORUS

Come on got a mission - in the dark of the night

And won't be back till its done just right

After we're back and the sun goes down

We'll [sour] Blue Star sounds.

CHORUS

Lift your eyes and follow us

We'll lead the way - no trouble or fuss

If you want something done

And you want it done right

We're listed under Blue Star

And flying day and night.

SHORT TIMER'S BLUES

By: 1 LT Ronald K. Damron

(Tune -I Walk the Line)

If you're in trouble and find that you need aid

If Charlie's got you pinned down and you're afraid

If you want a chopper to come and set you free

Do me a favor and don't call me.

If you are out of food and need some new recruits

Or if you want supplies and jungle boots

You say to drop them off in your LZ

Well would you take them from a thousand feet.

It's not that I mind Charlie or his friends

I just don't care about seeing them again

I'm getting short, and there's just one more thing

I hate to tempt old Charlie's aim.

For eleven months I was king of the road

I tried to carry more than my load

It's not that I mind flying with the gang
But I'm too short to play these games.
I'd like to leave this country far behind
This yellow streak is creeping up my spine
I've got to see the Doc 'fore its too late
I'm nearing my rotation date.

OLD PHAN RANG

By: Unknown

They say that ol' Phan Rang's a hell of a place
The organization a low down disgrace
There are Captains and Majors and Light Colonels too
Their hands in their pockets with nothing to do.
They stand on the runway
They scream and they shout
About many things they know nothing about.
For all they accomplish
They might as well be
Shoveling sand on the Isle of Capri.
Singing - Ring - Ding
Shove it in your ear
Better things are coming bye and bye
Bull Crap!!

ENCLOSURE 2 To Airmobile Techniques and Procedures SOP

AERIAL GUNNERY FOR HELICOPTER

GENERAL

Organic fire support for air assault operations is furnished by both conventional ground artillery units in air assault configurations and other divisional units equipped with armed helicopters. Units equipped with the aerial weapons systems are the aerial artillery battalion, cavalry squadron and weapons companies of the assault helicopter battalions. Target destruction or neutralization may be accomplished by either aerial or surface fire support means, but the extra mobility and range of aerial weapons units provide unique capabilities to support air assault operations. Although limited by ammunition and fuel load capacity, the armed helicopter units provide the commander with a significant increase and extension of available fire support beyond that provided by organic ground units of the airmobile division. To best employ armed helicopter units, commanders must know the principles, the weapons systems, and the procedures involved in target engagement.

PRINCIPLES OF ARMED HELICOPTER ATTACK

Successful employment of aerial weapons units involves seven basic considerations. These are speed, surprise, volume and type of fire, control, target approach, timing and terrain utilization.

Speed in the actual attack is essential to achieve surprise and the maximum effect with minimum vulnerability. All attacks are normally executed at maximum speed. Consideration of speed is also involved in the time required to reach and engage distant targets, and in the reaction time of on-call armed helicopters.

Surprise is highly desirable to maximize the effect of fires on a target and reduce aircraft vulnerability. Prior planning to select the best approach routes and best methods of attack, together with maximum speed in the attack itself, give the best assurance of surprise. Timing the attack to take best advantage of weather and lighting conditions, and selecting times when troops in the target area are fatigued or not alert also enhance surprise.

Volume and type of fire must be carefully planned for maximum effect. Firepower commensurate with the nature of the target and target [missing rest of this paragraph which appears on the top of page 3-2 in original document] both maximum effect and minimum helicopter exposure.

Control of the attack includes all measures which best take advantage of the possibilities involved. Ingenuity must be exercised to achieve surprise or deception so that application of fire is made at the exact time and in the manner best suited to the target. Target engagement by a single aircraft is rare, and in nearly all cases, two or more aircraft under a single flight leader engage the target. The flight leader must closely coordinate and control all aircraft throughout the entire attack. Experience, judgment, instantaneous communication and team performance are prerequisites to control. Control also implies the close coordination of helicopter attacks with the operations of other artillery aircraft, troops on the ground, and supporting artillery.

Target approach is normally made from the direction of greatest target vulnerability. Other factors such as terrain which offers covered or concealed approaches, winds which offer a more

silent approach, position of the sun, and multiple approaches, suitable for simultaneous attack from several directions must be quickly analyzed and exploited. This decision, by the flight leader, is perhaps the most critical element in target engagement.

Timing includes both the selection of the general time period of the attack and the more important precise coordination between aircraft to insure simultaneous target engagement by all attacking elements. The degree of success of the attack is, in most cases, closely related to the degree of coordination of attacking elements.

Terrain is utilized in the attack to cover the approach and the break from the target. Again, skillful planning and control is the key to success. Achievement of surprise, silent approach and simultaneous massing of fires require that the flight leader utilize all terrain possibilities to best advantage.

WEAPONS SYSTEMS

The various systems in use within the airmobile division may be categorized as area and point for aerial artillery units, suppressive and area for the cavalry, and suppressive fire delivery types for the weapons companies of the lift battalions. For specific pre-planning missions, fire support units may be acquired and tailored to the mission; on normal operations, supporting aerial weapons units with a task force will include a mix of weapons suitable for all anticipated targets.

The aerial artillery battalion is armed with the M3 area type weapons system which consists of two fixed pods of 24-2.75 inch rockets each, mounted one on each side of the UH-1B helicopter. The rate of fire is six pairs of rockets per second. Minimum range, determined by fuse arming, is 300 meters. Maximum effective range is 2,500 meters, although true maximum range is over 6,000 meters. Total rounds in each load is 48, each with a six meter bursting radius, thus each aircraft load in salvo is roughly equivalent to one battery volley of conventional 105mm artillery. Fired intermittently, the M3 may also be utilized in the suppressive fire role.

Suppressive fire weapons of the weapons companies include the M2 and M6 machine gun systems. The M2 system utilizes two 7.62mm M60c fixed machine guns, one on each side of the helicopter. Rate of fire is 600 rounds per minute for each gun, with a total load of 550 rounds per gun. An elevation range of nine degrees may be obtained, and guns may be elevated at the rate of six degrees per second or depressed at nine degrees per second. Effective range extends to 400 meters; with 800 meters maximum range. The M6 system is roughly equivalent to two M2 systems, but with greater flexibility. The same basic M60c machine guns are utilized, two on each side of the helicopter. Guns may be elevated to 15 degrees inboard and 70 degrees outboard. The total rate of fire, using all four guns, is 2,400 rounds per minute.

The M16, a combination of the M6 machine gun system with two 7-round pods of 2.75 inch rockets added, gives the commander a system with a high degree of flexibility of employment. Having both rockets and machine guns makes it suitable for area and suppressive type fire.

Point target systems of the aerial artillery are now limited to the M22, in which six wire-guided missiles are mounted on racks, three on each side of the helicopter. Rate of fire is one per minute. Effective ranges are 500 to 3,000 meters.

TARGET ENGAGEMENT

In addition to the factors discussed above in principles of attack, effectiveness of the aerial weapons unit is dependent upon the teamwork and skill of both the gunner and pilot. With rigid systems, where the pilot is also the gunner, accuracy is determined by the pilot's ability to maintain coordinated flight throughout his firing run. Any uncoordinated turning maneuver during a firing run will result in error in both range and deflection. Gunnery skill, acquired only through practice and experience, is the ultimate factor in successful aerial helicopter gunnery. The specific attack pattern for any target may vary widely, and must be tailored to each situation.

The flight patterns of helicopter elements armed with the M2 or M6 machine gun systems involve wide variations, but the normal firing run begins at a range of 300 meters from the target and terminates within 100 meters of the target. Accuracy is inversely proportional to range, thus fire becomes more accurate as the helicopter approaches the target. During engagement, the helicopter dives at maximum speed. See Figure 1. The steeper the angle of attack, the smaller the range dispersion pattern. For maximum effect, regardless of the angle of attack, the long axis of the elliptical firing pattern should coincide with the long axis of the target. See Figure 2. In the delivery of suppressive fires, the weapons companies are most frequently utilized in escort and security roles, and to secure landing zones during air assaults. Targets engaged are usually targets of opportunity in and around the landing zone. During this type mission, helicopters are employed in trail formation.

The M22 missile system provides the division with an organic airborne anti-armor capability. The M22 is employed only against point targets, normally armored vehicles. Since the missile flight is wire-guided, an unobstructed line of sight between the gunner and the target must be maintained for accurate delivery. Accuracy is dependent upon the skill of the gunner, who guides one round at a time to the target. Although hit probability is increased by shorter ranges, engagement at longer ranges reduces vulnerability and enhances surprise. Attacking aircraft may use the pop-up technique and remain relatively stationary during engagement, or move slowly toward the target on a level or descending flight path. Lateral or turning movements with regard to the target tend to greatly reduce the gunner's accuracy.

Aerial artillery helicopters, equipped with the M3 rocket system, are the most flexible area fire weapons in the Air Assault arsenal, and are utilized on a wide variety of missions. Assault preparatory fires are employed to neutralize enemy positions prior to assaults by placing direct aerial fire on the objective. During the actual assault direct suppressive fires are delivered in or near the landing zone by artillery helicopters which orbit in the area or remain on-call in forward larger areas until initial assault objectives are secured. The short response times of on-call aerial ships greatly extend the artillery fire power available to the commander. Orbit area selection is based upon the desires of the support ground commander, to whom the aerial artillery element commander and the fire support coordinator make recommendations. Known enemy strong point locations and local air defenses are primary considerations in recommending orbit areas. Counter battery fire missions may be flown by aerial artillery ships, to include night missions. Aerial artillery units are particularly effective in missions against radar-directed anti-aircraft systems, using a low level, multi-directional attack pattern under the radar screening capability. The flexible fire power and mobility of aerial artillery make it particularly useful to cover withdrawals of either ground or air assault units. The harassing and interdiction fire plans of conventional artillery units may be reinforced and greatly extended in depth by employment of aerial artillery aircraft. The largest number of aerial rocket missions involve targets of opportunity, due to the unique ability of the armed helicopter to both locate and engage these targets. The two basic flight formations utilized in the attack of targets of opportunity are extended, in which aircraft fly in trail, and the spread, in which aircraft on line are able to fire simultaneously. In either formation, attacks may employ the pop-up technique, in which aircraft fly nap-of-the-earth, climb rapidly to

attack altitude at a distance of about 2,500 and 3,000 with ranges between 1,500 and 1,000 meters. Disengagement occurs as soon as rockets are fired and attacking aircraft return to low attitude without overflying the target. Except for targets of opportunity, aerial rocket fire missions are normally received from the reinforced or supported unit, or through artillery fire control channels. Fire mission requests and fire orders within the aerial artillery battalion are standardized to expedite receipt and completion of fire missions.

Surveillance reports are rendered after each mission, by the firing element leader to the unit which requested the mission. Damage and causality assessments are vital intelligence and speedy, accurate reporting is essential to keeping the commander informed.

Night [missing the rest of the sentence at the top of page 3-6 in the original document] ... and more careful map analysis, [not] frequently achieve greater devastation and disorganization of enemy forces due to surprise and reduced defensive capability. The flash of artillery provides an ideal night target for rocket aircraft. Illumination may be used to insure more delivery of fires, but at the expense of loss of surprise.

Six general rules of target engagement for the armed helicopter units are: Engage at maximum range, change the direction of each firing run, maintain continuous fire from initial engagement through disengagement, attack at maximum feasible air speed, attack from over known secure positions if possible, and avoid overflight of the target.

[Back to Memories Page](#)

PREFACE

Journalists refer to part of my service time as the period when *LBJ Goes to War*. More than three decades passed since I transferred to the 48th from a German airfield on the outskirts of Munich. The autumn of 1965 led to battles in the Ia Drang that ended European tours for many individuals. My orders specified placement with the 12th Aviation Group in Saigon. Nevertheless, by 1966 I was in the 48th resisting a motive to volunteer for a helicopter unit in Thailand. The journey to Vietnam was too drawn-out to do anything else but stay in the Central Highlands. Twelve months later logic told me there was a better way to earn a living. The Army and I parted ways. The war raged on while I went back to school to learn another occupation. Despite time's passage, the events in Captain McDowell's writing are as vivid today as they were long ago.

Two books published after 1966 relate in detail the ground action sustained by the 48th. They trace the combat operations of the 1st Brigade/101st Airborne Division. Unfortunately, the writers^{1,2} never acknowledged the source of their mobility nor armed helicopter support. Our history fills that gap. The first twelve chapters are a diary of day-to-day activities. In Chapter 13 company members appraise various events in poems and songs. An enclosure concludes with a description of air-mobile techniques and procedures.

A couple of incidents prompted me to search for this history. A colleague initially gave me a book saying: "Look at this, it reads on what you say." I read the title, scanned one page and handed it back saying: "It's about the 1st Cav, not the 48th." Then while speaking to collegians studying the Vietnam War, reaction from one student torpedoed my integrity. She told me that: "Everything you have said is in the book!" "What book," I asked. "*Chickenhawk*," she answered. *Chickenhawk*, the book I dismissed now challenged my creditability. A lift platoon pilot³ already told about events at Phan Rang, Tuy Hoa, and Dak To in a style unlike my own. Consequently, tracking down our history became an important task.

My first clue came from memory. Ed Brophy mentioned its existence during one of our in-country talks. Recollection of his narrative follows the words in Chapters 2 through 4. Years afterward I received a research paper about military folklore in Vietnam. Its author⁴ served with a quartermaster battalion and acknowledged pilfering reference material from our company files. His piracy caused some self-seeking anger. He procured a souvenir when I had none, but finding Joe Kochanski turned things around. Joe collected a mass of mementos from that first year and graciously gave me a copy of his original document. I have recorded that copy for submission to the public domain.

For those who were there, I hope the next few pages bring back some memories. For those who came after us, I hope you gain a little knowledge about your predecessors. For those who were never there, I hope you find this history to be an honest account of our experiences.

Finally, I dedicate this computerized version to the five persons lost on August 1, 1966. May we never forget Frank Gundaker, Richard Kitner, Ron Russell, Ernest Shuman, and Don Wallace.

John Freiberger III

Macedon, N.Y.

December, 1997

This history has been transcribed by John Feeiberger III from an old xerox copy of what was a memiographed original.

UNIT HISTORY

48TH ASSAULT HELICOPTER COMPANY (UH-1) (A)

5 July 1965 to 26 September 1966

Prepared By

JAMES I. McDOWELL

Captain, Transportation Corps

48TH AVIATION HISTORY

CHAPTER ONE: THE COMPANY IS FORMED

The 48th Aviation Company (Airmobile) (Light), with support detachments, the 390th Transportation Detachment, 279th Signal Detachment, and 286th Medical Detachment, was activated at Fort Benning, Georgia by General Order 200, Hq, Third US Army, on 5 July 1965. The only name listed on the 5 July morning report was that of Major Keith L. Groom, O4003648, the first Commanding Officer. The first enlisted entry on the morning report was Specialist Five Joseph B. Pearsey, which appeared on the 21st of July 1965. The following personnel strengths were authorized the 48th Aviation Company and the attached detachments:

UNIT	STRENGTH	TO&E
48th Avn Co (AML)	14 Off, 41 WO, 115 EM	1-77E w/c 1
390th TC Det (CHFM)	1 Off, 1 WO, 70 EM	55-500R w/c 9
286th Med Det	1 Off, 8 EM	8-500C w/c 9
279th Sig Det	1 Off, 9 EM	11-500D w/c 6

All personnel and equipment were to be obtained from locally available resources. The primary

source of personnel and equipment was the result of the 11th Air Assault Div (Test) and 2nd Infantry Div being reformed into the First Air Cavalry Division at Fort Benning, Georgia. The cadre officers were assigned from the 10th Avn Group and the EM came from various units declaring personnel excess as a result of their reorganization. The 48th Avn Co cadre coordinated through the S-4 officer of 10th Avn Group, Fort Benning, and received approximately 75% of their equipment through lateral transfer from the reorganizing units at Fort Benning. The remaining equipment and supplies were requisitioned through normal supply channels on a priority basis.

The pilots for the 48th Avn Co signed in at Hq, 10th Avn Group on 1 Sep 65. Nearly all the aviators reporting for duty with the 48th Avn Co were reassigned from European assignments and their tours had been curtailed as a result of the Vietnam build up.

Major Charles H. Drummond Jr assumed command of the 48th Avn Co on 1 Sep 65. From the personnel data cards completed by each officer inprocessing, Major Drummond established his chain of command. His key personnel were:

Major Charles H. Drummond Jr CO

SFC E7 George C. Daws 1/Sgt

Major Robert L. Stearns XO

Major Thomas L. Williamson Opns Off

Major Willis E. Smith 1st Airlift Plt Ldr

Major Harry J. Zellmer 2nd Airlift Plt Ldr

Major Velma F. Parker 3rd Plt Ldr(Gun Plt)

Captain Paul R. Lalumiere Jr Intel Off

Key personnel for attached detachments were:

Major Edward R. Brophy Jr CO, 390th TC Det

Captain Orlon B. Donaldson III CO, 279th Sig Det

Captain Arthur R. Hagen CO, 286th Med Det

During the month of September 1965, the company worked a seven day week and directed their efforts toward POR qualifying all personnel and to drawing, processing and packing TO&E and TA50 equipment for overseas shipment. Training days were alternated with work days. The training schedule included 10

hours refresher training per pilot, weapons qualification, survival, escape and evasion, code of conduct, Geneva Convention, first aid, pilot briefings on tactics and techniques and a general Vietnam orientation. The pilots trained in aircraft belonging to the 181st Avn Tng Co, Fort Benning, Georgia.

On 17 September 1965 Capt Rex Saindon, 1LT Robert Smith, CWO Thomas Paulson, CWO Kenneth Hill, CWO Gary Wilkinson, and WO [Glade] Fisher ferried five 48th Avn Co UH-1 helicopters to Eagle Mountain Army Depot, Fort Worth, Texas where they picked up five additional helicopters and continued to Stackton Army General Depot, California where the aircraft were processed for overseas shipment.

On 30 September the company conducted payday activities and all personnel desiring leave were granted leave until 18 October 1965. Personnel not desiring leave remained at Fort Benning and continued packing equipment.

Prior to movement overseas the 48th Avn Co and its detachments received inspections from the Inspector General, 3rd U.S. Army.

The 48th Avn Co and detachments were directed overseas by letter, United States Army Infantry Command, dated 8 September 1965, Subject: Permanent Change of Station of STRAF Forces.

CHAPTER TWO: ADVANCED PARTY DEPART TO ACCOMPANY AIRCRAFT OVERSEAS

On 14 October 1965 Major Edward R. Brophy Jr, Captain Max Mitchell, Captain Arthur Moen, Captain Arthur Hagen, CWO James V. McCartt, CWO Wayne F. Geer, and 20 enlisted personnel were called off leave to form the advance party to accompany the aircraft overseas. This advanced party boarded a bus for Atlanta, Georgia on 18 October. From Atlanta they flew commercial air to San Francisco International Airport. They reported to Alameda Naval Air Station, Oakland, California where they signed for 16 UH-1D and 9 UH-1B helicopters. The helicopters had already been processed for overseas shipment and had their main rotor blades, stabilizer bars, and tail rotor removed. The gun kits were boxed and secured inside the aircraft. The aircraft were zipped and locked inside large seaborne protective bags and loaded aboard the USNS KULA GULF, a baby aircraft carrier.

The advanced party for aircraft sailed from Alameda Naval Air Station, Oakland, California on 25 October 1965 aboard the USNS KULA GULF. The ship made one stop in the Philippine Islands prior to arriving at Cam Ranh Bay, RVN on 13 Nov 65. Five days out from Vietnam the advanced party started deprocessing and reassembling their helicopters.

Major Brophy, on the 13th of November flew one of the reassembled helicopters from the KULA GULF to Dong Ba Thin to coordinate with the CO, 10th Avn Bn in order to determine the new assignment and duty station for the 48th. Major Brophy was advised to proceed to Vung Tau, that the 48th was assigned to the 145th Avn Bn with duty station Vung Tau.

After being tied up in Cam Ranh Bay harbor for three days, the USNS KULA GULF again set sail with the 48th Avn Co advanced party and helicopters aboard, this time with its destination as Vung Tau, RVN. They were met at Vung Tau on 16 Nov 65 by Major Smith, Co, 611th Transportation Company. Major Smith assigned Major Brophy and the other pilots the call sign "BLUE STAR" to signal the arrival to the Vung Tau tower operator of the 48th Avn Co aircraft. The aircraft were flown off the USNS KULA GULF by 48th Avn pilots and parked in the "BLUE STAR" parking area. The remaining equipment on board the carrier was off loaded in seven CH-37 med hel loads. (The name "BLUE STAR" has remained with the 48th Avn Co since 16 Nov 65, however, the call sign was changed twice officially, though not in fact, and the Company Commander in both cases was able to get the Blue Star title back). The advanced party commenced de-preservation and safety of flight inspections on the aircraft and assembled and attached the gun systems to the aircraft. In the meantime, Major Brophy had made contact with

the 145th Avn Bn and he was advised that the 48th Avn Co had been transferred to the 10th Avn Bn and would relocate immediately to the Phan Rang Valley approximately [150] miles north of Vung Tau.

On 23 November 1965 Captain Rosengrant of the rear/advanced party had caught a flight aboard an Army Caribou from Nha Trang to Saigon attempting to link up with the advanced party for aircraft and to coordinate the meeting of the main body at Cam Ranh Bay on the 26th of November. Captain Rosengrant made contact with Captain Mitchell at 12th Avn Group Hqs, Saigon. He later met with Major Brophy and they arranged to have three aircraft meet the main body at Cam Ranh Bay on the 26th.

The advanced party for aircraft remained at Vung Tau for approximately two weeks readying the unit aircraft. As sufficient space and security were provided at Phan Rang, the aircraft were shuttled, at the rate of three per day, until all aircraft were relocated to Phan Rang.

CHAPTER THREE: MAIN BODY DEPARTS FORT BENNING

The 48th Avn Co minus the advanced party with the aircraft (see chap 2) and the rear/advanced party (see chap 4) departed Muscogee County Airport, Columbus, at hourly intervals between 2330 hours 4 Nov 65 and 0330 hours 5 Nov 65 by commercial Super Constellation aircraft for Oakland International Airport. The move was classified to avoid public suspicion. Commercial buses were on hand to meet each aircraft as it landed at Oakland International and carried the 48th Avn Co personnel with baggage to Oakland Army Terminal where they promptly boarded the USNS Geiger, a Navy Troop Carrier. The USNS Geiger sailed from Pier 7, Oakland Army Terminal at 1730 hours, 5 Nov 65 with the 48th Avn Co (minus) aboard. Throughout the trip, company officers were involved in writing company Standard Operating Procedures to prepare them for operations in Vietnam. The USNS Geiger made one stop-off enroute to RVN at Guam Island and liberty was afforded all personnel from 0900 hours until 1300 hours on 18 Nov 65. The only facility open at the Navy base was a snack bar until the officers of the 48th Avn Co passed the hat and bribed the Naval Officers club bar tender to open the bar at 1030 hours. The enlisted personnel arranged through the Naval Petty Officer's club to have beer and snacks taken to the beach, and the beach party that ensued few will forget.

The next stop was Qui Nhon, RVN where the USNS Geiger tied up for three days, 23-26 Nov, while other units disembarked. All 48th Avn Co personnel remained aboard the USNS Geiger in Qui Nhon harbor. The company spent their first National holiday overseas, enjoying a delicious Thanksgiving Day dinner aboard the ship. Their menu included turkey, mashed potatoes & gravy, candied yams, cranberries, peas & carrots, relishes, minced and pumpkin pie and ice cream served with coffee, milk or tea.

The USNS Geiger departed Qui Nhon harbor at approximately 2400 hours, 25 Nov 65 and anchored in Cam Ranh Bay at approximately 0730 hours 26 Nov 65. Captain Thurmond, OIC of the Rear/Advanced party met the company aboard the USNS Geiger. Captain Thurmond briefed the Commanding Officer, Major Charles H. Drummond Jr on the unit assignment with 10th Avn Bn and duty station at Phan Rang.

The company, shortly after arrival at Cam Ranh Bay, disembarked into LCU's (Landing Craft Utility), which transported them to the beach. All personnel were issued their basic load of ammunition in the rain. Fifteen of the officers boarded three company helicopters which Major Brophy had brought from Vung Tau (see chapter 2) and flew directly to Phan Rang. The remainder of the company boarded 2 1/2 ton trucks from the 10th Transportation Battalion, Cam

Ranh. The trucks were ferried across Cam Rahn Bay and formed a convoy for the trip over National Highway #1 to Phan Rang. An Ol-A Bird Dog flew convoy escort and two UH-1B gunships were on standby at Cam Ranh Bay for purposes of security. The company closed station at Phan Rang at 1900 hours, 26 November 1965.

CHAPTER FOUR: THE REAR PARTY CLOSED OUT FORT BENNING AND BECAME THE COMPANY ADVANCED PARTY

The rear party, composed of Captain James F. Thurmond (OIC), Captain Larue R. Rosengrant, 1LT William T. Ragan, SSG Gilbert McCollough, SSG Delbert L. Hall, SP5 Jimmie H. Ray, and PFC Donald D. Wallace remained at Fort Benning to close out property accounts and to turn over their building to another unit. The rear party were the last 48th Avn Co personnel to depart CONUS, the only members to fly directly to RVN, and the first to arrive in Vietnam. The rear party departed Fort Benning by bus and boarded a Commercial Airlines at Muscogee County Airport, Columbus, Georgia, at 0800 hours on 10 Nov 65. They flew by Commercial Air, to San Francisco International Airport. A bus met them at the airport and took them directly to Travis AFB, California, where they were booked on a Pan American Jet for Saigon, RVN, with stops at Anchorage, Alaska, Tokyo, Japan, and Clark AFB, Philippine Islands. They arrived at Tan Son Nhut Airport, Saigon, RVN at 1300 hours, 13 Nov 65 and were now acting as the advanced party for the main body of the 48th Avn Co.

Shortly after arrival, Captain Thurmond contacted Colonel Jones, CO, 12th Avn Gp in Saigon to report their arrival. 12th Avn Group had no knowledge as to when the 48th Avn Co was scheduled in-country, who they would be assigned to or where their duty station would be. The advanced party moved into Camp Alpha, 90th Repl Bn, Tan Son Nhut AFB, Saigon, and awaited notification of their assignment. On 16 Nov 65, the party received word that the 48th Avn Co would be assigned to the 10th Avn Bn at Dong Ba Thin and they hopped a ride aboard an Air Force C-130 to Cam Ranh Air Force base. Their personal and company equipment, to include classified documents, were off loaded on the runway and the C-130 departed. Captain Thurmond contacted 10th Avn Bn who dispatched a helicopter to Cam Ranh. Captain Thurmond and Lt Ragan flew to Dong Ba Thin to coordinate with the CO, 10th Avn Bn. Captain Rosengrant and the advanced party (minus) remained overnight at Cam Ranh and joined the others on 18 Nov in Dong Ba Thin. Coordination was completed with Lt Col Olney, who informed them that the 48th Avn Co advance party with the aircraft had been in Cam Ranh but had departed for Vung Tau (see chap 2). Lt Col Olney, Captain Thurmond and Lt Ragan, on 17 Nov 65, flew a helicopter to Phan Rang to reconnoiter a location for the 48th Avn Co. Coordination was made with Colonel B M Mattlick, the Air Force Commander, and Colonel Timothy, CO, 1st Bde, 101st Abn Div, and the area they agreed upon was an area approximately five acres in size and located East of the Buu Son airstrip. On the 20th the advanced party convoyed from Dong Ba Thin to Phan Rang in a 2 1/2 ton and 3/4 ton truck they borrowed from the 10th Avn Bn. Passing through the village of Phan Rang they continued straight at Thap Cham where they should have turned right. After realizing their mistake and in the process of turning around, the 2 1/2 ton truck received fire from a sniper. This was the first incident where the 48th Aviation Company received hostile fire. No injuries were sustained and the group continued to the military compound at Phan Rang.

The advanced party encamped with the Air Force, who at the time amounted to an advanced party in Phan Rang with only a few tents erected. The advanced party measured off and staked out the company area. They arranged from the Air Force to have cots, tents and water for the company upon their arrival. They coordinated with the 101st Abn Div (also new in Phan Rang) and a field kitchen, complete with fire unit, pots, and pans, was obtained. Rations were also drawn from the 101st. On 23 Nov 65 Capt Rosengrant arranged a flight from Nha Trang to Saigon to link

up with Major Brophy and the advanced party accompanying the aircraft, and to arrange for three company aircraft to meet the main body in Cam Rahn on the 26th. Captain Thurmond met the company aboard the USNS Geiger in Cam Ranh Bay and briefed the company commander on the new location. Company officers were making bets on whether or not Captain Thurmond would make it up the side of the ship via its rope ladder. It was a struggle but Captain Thurmond made it.

CHAPTER FIVE: 48TH AVN CO (AML) ARRIVES AT PHAN RANG

The 48th Avn Co, upon arrival at Phan Rang on 26 Nov 65, moved into Air Force tents arranged for them by the advanced party. The first three days in Phan Rang, the officers, NCO's and EM all were issued axes, machetes, and other tools and everyone pitched in to attempt to clear the trees and underbrush from the area which was to be their new home. On 30 Nov 65 the 48th Avn Co moved out of the Air Force tents and into their partially cleared area. Company personnel continued to clear the company area and as sufficient space was cleared, aircraft were ferried from Vung Tau at the rate of three per day until all aircraft were relocated to Phan Rang. The first casualty for the 48th in Vietnam was Captain Paul R. Lalumiere Jr when he received a light injury from a machete during the clearing operations. Lt Jack Horne, while working at clearing operations, encountered one of the many poisonous snakes in the area. The company soon employed approximately 200 coolies to get the clearing operation under way. Throughout the first few weeks while the 48th was clearing the land and building their camp the monsoon rains were in full force and they worked, ate, and slept in mud up to their knees. Before getting settled at their new home, the Phan Rang MACV Sector Advisor warned them that a Viet Cong attack was imminent. On 2 Dec 65 the pilots evacuated the aircraft to Dong Ba Thin where they stayed with the 117th and 129th Airmobile companies for two nights. Throughout the remainder of December it became a nightly procedure to evacuate the aircraft to the 101st Airborne Division containment area and the crews billeted with units of the 101st. The early part of December was spent clearing the company area, digging foxholes, erecting tents and some limited flying missions.

On 21 Dec 65 the 48th conducted its first company sized airmobile operation when it administratively lifted A/2/502nd Abn Inf from Phan Rang to the shore of the South China Sea some 15 miles East, and returned to Phan Rang with C/2/502nd Abn Inf. Ten UH-1D's and four UH-1B's (gunships) took part in the exercise.

On 22 December, Major Ralph Broman became Operations Officer.

On 23 December, Major Broman and CWO Geer experienced the first engine failure in Vietnam. They put the ship down in a rice paddy without a scratch and were quickly rescued.

On 27 Dec. 65, twenty-three door gunners were assigned to the 48th Avn Co by the 10th Avn Bn. CWO Temple and WO Fisher departed for Tuy Hoa with a C&C ship to support the 117th Airmobile Company.

On 29 December, the 48th Avn Co completed its first operational combat mission, with the extraction of bodies from a crashed [CH-37] aircraft. The aircraft had been lost in the mountains approximately 16 miles south of Phan Rang. Earlier attempts by another Airmobile Company to rescue the bodies had been driven off by enemy fire. The 2/327th Abn Inf Bn conducted a combat assault in the vicinity of the crash site to secure the area, however, numerous enemy remained. Captain Arthur Moen and 1LT Robert E. Smith had been flying C&C for the 2/327th and volunteered to attempt extraction. They successfully accomplished this difficult mission under extremely hazardous conditions. Both 48th Avn Co pilots received the Air Medal with "V" device

and were the first members of the 48th Avn Co to be decorated for heroism.

Also on 29 Dec, Captain Carl R. Jones, Captain Morris R. Steenson, Captain Donald R. Kelsey, and CWO Dominik L. Guccione departed for Tuy Hoa with two gunships to augment and train with the 117th Avn Co through 6 Jan 66. The first time 48th aircraft received enemy fire was when these crews and 117th pilots were conducting a live fire exercise in a designated free fire area west of Tuy Hoa and while undergoing target practice an enemy sniper within close vicinity of the target fired back at them. There was no damage to either aircraft or crews.

CHAPTER SIX: COMPANY IS DECLARED OPERATIONAL - 1 JAN 66

On 1 Jan 66 the 48th Aviation Company (AML) was declared combat operational by the CO, Major Charles H. Drummond Jr. The company was in-country a total of only 36 days before it was declared combat operational.

At 0045 hours, 1 Jan 66, the 48th Avn Co crews at Tuy Hoa underwent a mortar attack. The Viet Cong landed 21 mortar rounds within the camp. Fortunately no personnel were injured.

The 48th Avn Co received its first aircraft hit from hostile fire on 2 Jan 66. Aircraft #084, flown by Captain Carl Jones received a hit from small arms fire just below the horizontal stabilizer while escorting a medevac helicopter. This occasion, incidentally, happened on Captain Jones' birthday.

After rehearsing for three days, the 48th Avn Co pilots put out the 101st Abn Div LRRP (Long Range Reconnaissance Patrol) in an area 10 miles SE of Phan Rang. The insertion was timed for approximately 15 minutes remaining light. The helicopters orbited 15 minutes after insertion and started back toward home base when the LRRP made an emergency call to the 48th pilots requesting extraction as they were heavily engaged in a fire fight. The 48th Avn Co gunships, led by Major LaVere W. Bindrup, suppressed the enemy fire and the slicks (UH-1D's) extracted the team. This was the first time 48th Avn Co personnel actively engaged the enemy.

4 Jan 66: (Phan Rang) gunships attacked a Viet Cong platoon sighted in the open by the 101st LRRP. After the gunship attack, 48th Avn Co aircraft lifted a platoon of 101st Abn Inf troops to the battle site. The LRRP reported having observed two ox cart loads of bodies being removed after the gunship attack. The official estimate was 12 VC KBA (Killed by Aircraft).

4 Jan 66: (Phan Rang) The company received its TO&E equipment. Repair parts had been in-country but had not been delivered to Phan Rang, prior to this date.

8 Jan 66: Captains Kelsey and Steenson (097), Captain Clemens and CWO Markel (085), 1LT Green and CWO Morris (093) were called to Saigon to reinforce the 155th Avn Co with gunships on Operation Crimp. The operation required 10 Airmobile companies with over 300 aircraft and two complete Infantry Brigades (1st Div and 25th Div) were heli-lifted. A large battle took place on 9 Jan 66. The first LZ in which the 48th Avn Co gun pilots provided pre-strike fires and armed escort had 4 of the 7 gunships severely damaged by hostile fire. The three 48th aircraft were the three not receiving hits. Twelve .50 cal machine guns were captured by the ground troops in this LZ. The 48th gunships escorted troop carrying UH-1D's into a total of three additional LZ's and aircraft were severely damaged from hostile fire in each, but miraculously the 48th again sustained no hits. The crews returned to Phan Rang on the 10th with their first real test of combat flying. The same crews departed the following day again for Tuy Hoa and again to support the

117th Avn Co during Operation Jefferson in conjunction with the ROK (Republic of Korea) Brigade.

9 Jan 66: SO 5, para 19, Hq, 10th Avn Bn, nineteen security personnel were assigned to the 48th Avn Co. Within a week the security personnel totaled 31 and were formed into a security platoon. Their mission was to provide physical security for the 48th Avn Co.

12 Jan 66: At 1300 hours the 48th Avn Co departed Phan Rang for Tuy Hoa with 6 UH-1D's and 3 UH-1B's to reinforce the 129th Avn Co on Operation Jefferson. This became the first sustained support of a combat operation by the 48th Avn Co and this date set off a long and still continuing chain of combat support operations. On 12 Jan the 1st Airlift Platoon departed Phan Rang for Song Mau to support the 2/327th Abn Inf Bn on a combat operation. The first platoon rejoined the company at Tuy Hoa South Airfield. The Service Platoon was split between Tuy Hoa and Phan Rang and the 390th Det (-) remained at Phan Rang as did the administrative section of the company. During this operation aircraft were returned to Phan Rang for PE's and major maintenance. The crews accompanied their aircraft to Phan Rang for PE and were allowed to rest during the time the aircraft underwent maintenance.

CHAPTER SEVEN: OPERATION VAN BUREN/HARRISON: TUY HOA

The 48th Avn Co was in general support of both Operation Van Buren (18 Jan-20 Feb 66) and Operation Harrison (21 Feb - 15 Mar 66) with priority of missions going to the 1st Brigade of the 101st Airborne Division. Missions were received by the 10th Avn Bn at the CSCC (Combat Support Coordination Center) and relayed to the companies. The company was briefed that elements of the 95th PAVN (Peoples Army of Vietnam) Regiment, the 3rd Viet Cong Regiment and local Viet Cong companies were known to be operating north and west of Tuy Hoa. The major friendly units in the area were the 1st Brigade of the 101st Airborne Division, a Republic of Korea Brigade, and the 47th ARVN (Army of the Republic of Vietnam) Regiment. The 48th Avn Co supported all three friendly elements from 18 Jan - 15 Mar 66.

The 48th Avn Co jelled as a fighting team at Tuy Hoa. They fast earned the reputation for rendering timely and professional aviation support to ground troops ranging from simple one ship supply missions to leading multi-company night combat assaults into insecure landing zones.

The 48th Avn Co, remaining in the field on direct combat support operations from 10 Jan - 15 Mar 66, established a new record for the number of days of sustained combat support from a field location by an airmobile company. Statistically the 48th, on their first combat support operations, achieved an impressive record. During this period, the 48th Avn Co led the largest night helicopter assault on record. Thirty six (36) UH-1D's from three companies escorted by twelve (12) gunships. The mission was to lift two battalions of the 1st Bde, 101st Abn Div commencing at 0100 hours to exploit the effects of a B-52 bombing raid. This assault was accomplished by infiltrating a pathfinder team which lighted the landing zone.

On 2 February the 48th Avn Co set another record by lifting the largest number of troops (2400) and cargo (100 tons) into the largest assortment of landing zones (15) in the history of the Vietnam war. This was accomplished with eighteen (18) UH-1D's (six from the 117th Avn Co). The average pilot on that day flew over nine hours.

(10 Jan - 15 Mar 66)

Total hours flown 1,879:30

Total sorties flown 19,524

Total cargo lifted 857 tons

Total passengers carried 15,524

Number of aircraft hit by enemy fire 11

Number of aircraft shot down by enemy fire 2

Number of aircraft destroyed by enemy fire 1

Number of Viet Cong KBA 29 confirmed

8 estimated

Quantity of ammo expended

7.62mm 340,300 rounds

40mm 1,068 rounds

2.75 inch rockets 4,977 rockets

JP-4 fuel consumed 250,619 gallons

Number of crew members wounded 8

The 48th Avn Co returned to Phan Rang from Tuy Hoa and remained at home station from 15 Mar - 11 Apr 66. During this period the company maintained five aircraft with crews in Nha Trang in support of HQ, Field Forces [III]. At home station emphasis was placed on performing maintenance of aircraft vehicles and in improving the living conditions at Phan Rang. During this period the officers constructed an officers club. The club is of frame structure with a concrete floor and corrugated steel roofing. Employees of RMK Construction company rendered invaluable services and materials in building the club. Captain John Jenks was the first appointed club officer and he supervised the construction effort and conducted the necessary correspondence to establish a legal officers open mess.

The command of the 48th Avn Co was temporarily assumed by Major Willis E. Smith from 17-31 March 1966. Major Charles H. Drummond Jr re-assumed command of the 48th Avn Co on 31 March 1966. Major Harry Mck Roper Jr assumed command of the company from Major Drummond on 4 April 1966.

On the 2nd and 3rd of April 1966 the 48th Avn Co provided seven UH-1D slick helicopters and two UH-1B armed helicopter in support of the 161st Airmobile Co who were supporting the 1st Cav Regt (ROK) in operations against two known Viet Cong Battalions operating within a twenty kilometer square northwest of Qui Nhon, RVN. This short operation proved to be one of the hottest engagements the 48th Avn Co had participated in up to that time. Four UH-1D and one

UH-1B helicopters received direct hits. One aircraft returned with over forty entry holes in the airframe caused from a mortar round exploding close to the aircraft. Statistically these nine aircraft completed a big job for a two day period.

Total sorties flown 315

Total troops carried 206

Total cargo lifted 51.9 tons

Total troops medically evacuated 9 U.S.

Total enemy KBA 6

Total hours flight time 34:00

Total ammo expended

7.62mm 3200 rounds

40mm 300 rounds

2.75 inch rockets 8 rockets

CHAPTER EIGHT: THE UNIT CREST AND MOTTO

Shortly after assuming command, Major Roper designed a company crest. The background for the crest is a "Blue Star" bordered in gold, derived from the original and still-in-effect unit call sign, centered inside the Blue Star are the numerals "48" in white letters with black trim. Lettered in red on a white scroll below the Blue Star is the unit motto "SKILL NOT LUCK" also contrived by Major Roper. Upon arrival in country and prior to assuming command of the 48th, Major Roper was repeatedly told of the many successful operations by the newly formed 48th Avn Co, of which most sources contributed their success to pure luck. After but a brief period with the company, Major Roper realized that it was skill, not luck, which accounted for the 48th Avn Co's success and hence the company motto originated. The Blue Star has become a symbol of strong pride among the members of the 48th Avn Co. Each aircraft adorns a Blue Star trimmed in gold on its tail section, and the men in the company proudly wear the Blue Star patch on their right breast pocket. The gun platoon, known by their call sign as the "Jokers" have altered the basic 48th Avn Co crest by placing in green letters the word "Joker" on the white background above the scroll. The members of the 286th Medical Detachment have altered their crest slightly by having embroidered on the white background a red cross with numerals 286 in black just above the red cross.

CHAPTER NINE: OPERATION AUSTIN II

After the short breather in Phan Rang the 48th Avn Co again took to the field, this time they moved South to Phan Thiet, RVN, and again were in general support of the 1st Bde, 101st Abn Div, and in direct support of the 1st Bn, 327th Abn Inf, 1st Bde, 101st Abn Div. There were reported widespread Viet Cong terrorist activities west and north of Phan Thiet. Operation Austin II was conducted in two phases. Phase I (11-19 Apr 66) was conducted to the west of Phan Thiet.

The activity of Phase I, with the exception of two large combat assaults, was primarily in support of small units conducting search and destroy missions. Assaults with from two to five aircraft were made into dispersed confined landing zones. Phase II (20-25 Apr. 66) kicked off with the 48th Avn Co making a night combat assault carrying 425 troops of the 1/327th Abn Bn into three LZ's approximately 40 miles north of Phan Thiet. This operation went on record as the largest night combat assault conducted by an airmobile company in the history of the Vietnam war.

For the remainder of Phase II of Austin II the 48th Avn Co staged its aircraft from a forward base of operations, (SF Camp Luong Son) and during daylight hours remained on immediate standby. As the Infantry troops developed the enemy situation the 48th provided troop lift, re-supply, and armed helicopter support. Statistical results of the 48th Avn Co support of Austin II are as follows:

Total hours flown 767

Total sorties flown 2794

Total cargo lifted 78 tons

Total passengers carried 3946

Total aircraft hit by enemy fire 4

Structures damaged 47

Structures destroyed 66

Total VC KBA (confirmed) 13

Crew members wounded 1

Emergency medical evac 6

Total ammo expended

7.62mm 183,000 rounds

40mm 3,300 rounds

2.75 inch rockets 487 rockets

JP-4 fuel consumed 57,790 gallons

On 24 April 1966, while in general support of Operation Austin II, the 48th Avn Co received a mission of direct support to the 2nd Bn, 44th Inf Regt (ARVN) for a combat assault into an LZ approximately 20 miles south of Phan Thiet. The gunships made a pre-strike of the LZ but drew no fire. Inbound to the LZ aircraft 776, piloted by CWO's William Moore and Tom Paulson, experienced an engine failure. The two pilots expertly autorotated their aircraft without damage to the aircraft or injury to the Vietnamese troops aboard. Following the troop lift a gunship escorting a UH-ID on a resupply mission received four hits. No injuries were sustained by crew

members.

Total sorties flown 114

Total troops carried 122

Total cargo lifted 1 ton

Total hours flown 44:30

Total ammo expended

7.6mm 12,260 rounds

40mm 250 rounds

2.75inch rockets 56 rockets

CHAPTER TEN: OPERATION AUSTIN VI (29 Apr - 18 May 66)

The company, completing Operation Austin II, broke camp and loaded their equipment aboard US Air Force C-130 transports at Phan Thiet airfield and were flown to an airstrip at Nhon Co near the Cambodian border. The air crews loaded their aircraft with personal equipment and were able to RON at Phan Rang enroute to Nhon Co.

The 48th Aviation Company was placed in direct support of the 1/327 th Abn Inf Bn, 1st Bde, 101st Abn Div with additional mission support of general support to the 1st Bde, 101st Abn Div and the 45th Inf Regt (ARVN). An enemy force of unknown size was operating along the Cambodian border utilizing trails to infiltrate personnel and equipment from North Vietnam into South Vietnam. The weather until 1000 hours was generally overcast with ceilings from 100 to 200 feet and 1 mile visibility, lifting from 500 to 1000 feet until 1500 hours and 1800 hours daily. The terrain over which the company operated varied from 1300 MSL to 2300 MSL. The preponderance of the area was covered by heavy jungle vegetation varying in height from 100 to 150 feet. The company established its camp within the perimeter of a newly formed Special Forces Camp. Living conditions were severely crowded due to the lack of space. Newly recruited Montagnard CIDG (Civilian Irregular Defense Group) companies with their families manned the perimeter surrounding the 48th Avn Co.

The 48th Aviation pilots experienced increased difficulty in low level navigation over the dense jungle. It was also discovered that the dense jungle canopies reduced the effectiveness of enemy fire. In bad weather and at night flares proved especially valuable in helping the pilots find Nhon Co airfield.

The first troop lift for the 1/327th Infantry Battalion occurred on 1 May 66. The Bn was lifted into LZ Savannah (YU628465) and the 48th Avn Co provided ammunition, re-supply and troop lift capability from Nhon Co airfield through 9 May 66. During the period 9-16 May 66, the 1/327th Abn Inf Bn operated their base of operations from Bu Gia Map airfield which is WSW of Nhon Co approximately 20 miles. Five UH-1D's and 2 UH-1B's were maintained on strip alert during

the day at Bu Gia Map airfield for resupply and minor troop moves.

Statistical Data

Combat sorties flown 2386

Troops moved 3587 U.S.

600 Non-U.S.

Ammunition expenditures

7.62mm 45,700 rounds

40mm 600 rounds

2.75 inch rockets 232 rockets

Total flight time 854.5 hourS

CHAPTER ELEVEN: STOP OFF AT CHEO REO

Again the 48th Avn Co (AML) packed their gear, struck their tents and loaded their equipment on USAF C-130 pallets for air transport. On 20 May 66 the air crews with their Heuys packed down with personal equipment and tents departed Nhon Co for Phan Rang. The crews were afforded the opportunity of staying 4 days and 3 nights at "home". The remainder of the company stayed at Nhon Co until all unit equipment was loaded aboard C-130 aircraft and they proceeded directly to Cheo Reo, the next base of operations.

The air crews took full advantage of being back in Phan Rang, which by this time was becoming more of a fable than a reality to most Blue Stars. The new officers club, which you recall was constructed by unit personnel as were all other structures claimed by the 48th, was the sight of two rather gay parties. It was the first opportunity for the officers to relax and enjoy their own club.

The company closed Cheo Reo on 24 May and started again the now routine procedure of erecting tents, sand bagging their tents, digging foxholes, setting up latrines and a shower point, erecting mess tents and a kitchen and establishing operations.

The 48th Avn Co was again in support of the 1st Bde, 101st Abn Div. Both units were at Cheo Reo to participate in Operation Trooper which never took place. The 48th's tenure at Cheo Reo was abruptly curtailed by orders to again break camp and move. Due to tactical considerations by higher headquarters the 101st and 10th Avn Bn, parent unit of the 48th Avn Co, were to proceed without delay to Dak To. The 48th was encamped at Cheo Reo only six days (24 - 30 May) and no significant operations were conducted.

CHAPTER TWELVE: DAK TO; REINFORCEMENT OF TOUMORONG;

OPERATION HAWTHORNE (1-20 Jun 66); OPERATION BEAURAGARD (24 Jun - 14 Jul 66)

The 48th Assault Helicopter Company (UH-1) (A) (the new designation for former airmobile companies proposed by Brigadier General Seneff, Commanding General, 1st Aviation Brigade and hence officially adopted) closed at Dak To on 30 May 1966. Dak To is located approximately 50 miles north of Kontum City in the Vietnamese Central Highlands. The 48th established their camp at Dak To #1 airstrip which is an abandoned airstrip approximately 5 KM East of the active Dak To airfield, also the sight of an American Special Forces Camp. Dak To #1 was reverently referred to as "Old Dak To". Old Dak To had a field elevation of approximately 2100 feet MSL and was situated in the spansive Dak To Valley. The surrounding countryside was mountainous with peaks varying from 3000 to 6000 feet MSL. Numerous streams flowed in the valleys providing many areas suitable for landing sights. The mountainous terrain was covered with heavy forest and dense jungle and offered very few landing zones. The weather was generally mild with the evenings quite cool. Early mornings it was common to be weathered in due to fog which generally rose to a ceiling of 1000 feet by 0900 hours. During midday there normally existed a scattered cloud layer from 4000 to 6000 feet MSL. There were occasional thunder showers in mid-afternoon, but the soil had good drainage and there was no real problem with mud.

The company was forewarned that they could expect to remain from five to six months at Dak To. This was all it required for the company to pull together and create a very livable camp. Throughout the area their existed numerous Montagnard tribes and several of these indigenous personnel were employed as KP's and workers. Several impressive hootches were constructed. One constructed by Captain Vincent Ripoll and First Lieutenant Ragan resembled more a Swiss Chalet than an Army hex tent. The majors, with two tents joined , had a porch with overhead canopy (parachute) and several large banana trees adorning their front yard. The supporting artillery units found the 48th Blue Stars a continuous pest as they begged, borrowed and stole 105mm ammo boxes. With the boxes they built wood floors for the mess tents and operations tent and within two weeks nearly all individual tents included wooden floors.

Since Dak To was nearly a three hour flight back to Phang Rang it was no longer practical to perform PE's and major maintenance from home base. For this reason the 390th Trans Det and the rear echelon of the company maintenance section packed up and joined the ubiquitous Blue Stars. The 390th set up operations at Kontum, just North of the local MACV compound. Aircraft were either evacuated or flown to Kontum when major maintenance was required.

Operationally the company was tasked with missions immediately. The company which had been together for nine months and had matured as a fighting unit was called on to perform perhaps their most demanding tasks.

The 24th North Vietnamese Regiment had been identified and was operating in the area just north of Dak To. The 104th Vietnamese Regional Force Company, manning an isolated outpost at Toumorong (coord ZB 138360) had been harassed by enemy fire since the end of April, and for the past six days had been under siege. The immediate enemy force estimated as two reinforced North Vietnamese companies were subjecting the Toumorong outpost to motor bombardment and had the ARVN's pinned down by heavy (12.7mm) machine gun fire from five well camouflaged and fortified positions. The Vietnamese outpost was near complete exhaustion of supplies and the danger of being overrun was imminent.

On 1 Jun 66 the 48th Assault Helicopter Company received from the 10th Aviation Combat Battalion the mission of reinforcing the Toumorong outpost with 64 Vietnamese Rangers staging at Kontum.

A reconnaissance flight of two armed UH-1B's and the C&C (Command & Control) aircraft were dispatched to Toumorong to ascertain the enemy's proximity, possible landing zones, flight routes and to draw enemy fire to confirm intelligence reports. By high recon it was determined that the best flight route would be along the river located in a valley NE of the finger of the ridge line where the beleaguered Vietnamese outpost was located. During low reconnaissance the two armed ships drew intense machine gun fire from two locations on a hill to the North overlooking the camp. The armed aircraft conducted recon by fire for approximately five minutes. They ascertained that the enemy was well dug in, with continuous observation and fields of fire of the only available LZ which was within the confines of the outpost proper.

Eight UH-1D's, five UH-1B gunships and 1 C&C ship took part in lifting the 64 Vietnamese Rangers and 2000 pounds of supplies into Toumorong outpost. The troops were picked up at Kontum and ferried North in staggered trail, flights of two with a 15 second interval between flights. Four sorties of A1-E fighter aircraft failed to silence the enemy's machine guns. The five UH-1B's preceded the flight by five minutes and conducted an intense pre-strike and then formed on the inbound UH-1D's and escorted them into the 4500 foot pinnacle landing zone, attempting to divert the enemy fire from the troop laden ships and to provide suppressive fire. During the approach into the landing zone and in the LZ the helicopters were under heavy fire. The combat assault was successfully completed, but one UH-1D and one UH-1B had sustained damage from hostile fire.

The following morning on 2 Jun 66, the 48th AHC received the mission of delivering 1200 pounds of cargo and a signal relay team of 13 men from the 101st Airborne Division who were to become an important communications link for Operation Hawthorne which was just kicking off. Again throughout the night the Toumorong outpost had been under heavy attack. Three UH-1B's and five UH-1D's accomplished the mission. As the armed helicopters began striking the enemy positions the first flight started their approach under intense hostile fire. The pilot of the lead aircraft, WO Jimmie Nunn, was hit by enemy fire seconds after landing in the landing zone. The other aircraft continued to land in spite of heavy enemy fire. When the two aircraft loaded with cargo landed the ground troops recently landed were pinned down. The 48th AHC crew chiefs and gunners displayed exceptional bravery when they left their machine gun stations and unloaded the 1200 pounds of critically needed cargo. The mission was successfully accomplished but five aircraft participating in the lift received damage by hostile fire. One UH-1B received major damage and the UH-1D's received numerous hits throughout the cabin sections and tail booms. The pilot, WO Nunn, was wounded in the right forearm and evacuated to the field hospital at Pleiku. WO Nunn was also hit in his chest protector, which saved his life. Crew chief, SP5 Harlan H. Kohnert was wounded by shrapnel on the back of both hands. He was treated at the 48th AHC dispensary and returned to duty.

These heroic actions by the crews of the 48th AHC, who displayed exceptional devotion to duty and professional skill, were responsible for the successful reinforcement of the besieged Toumorong outpost on 1 Jun 66 and for emplacing an important signal relay team the following day.

Throughout Operation Hawthorne, which commenced on 1 Jun 66, the 48th AHC was in general support of the 1st Bde, 101st Abn Div with priority of mission support to the 1/327th Abn Inf Bn. Operation Hawthorne was a highly successful operation in which the 101st Airborne, later reinforced by elements of the 1st Air Cavalry Division, encircled an estimated 1200 North Vietnamese Regular troops. American B-52 long range bombers unloaded 432 tons of 500 and 1000 pound bombs in what military spokesmen called "one of the largest" bombings of the war. The bomb raid was on target and enemy casualties mounted into the hundreds. The 48th AHC, as

the statistical analysis points out (below), played a large part in the successful exploitation of the bombing. Individual acts of heroism were numerous and too large a number for these pages. Several night missions were conducted and most of these of an emergency nature such as medical evacuations and resupply of food, water, and ammunition. On one occasion on 7 Jun, three Joker aircraft (UH-1B) returning from an escort mission intercepted an urgent radio call from "B" Battery, 1/320th Artillery. They were being overrun, in fact the enemy had already taken one gun position. The Jokers made six gun runs each with 2.75 inch rockets, 40mm grenades, and 7.62mm machine guns and through exceptionally close air-to-ground support stymied the enemy attack long enough to allow the artillerymen to regroup and successfully counter attack. On 10 Jun 66 a Marine helicopter crashed into the mountain North of the 48th AHC camp. Captain Milton J. Sands Jr., Flight Surgeon, 48th AHC, hearing that one of the pilots had a possible broken back volunteered to go to the sight where he climbed down a rope from a hovering helicopter to the injured aviator. Doc Sands, in an outstanding display of courage and professional ability was credited with saving the lives of four seriously injured men.

Statistical Data: Operation Hawthorne

Total hours flown 787.1

Total sorties 3247

Number combat assault sorties 1183

Total cargo hauled (Tons) 73.1

Total passengers carried 4322

Aircraft hit by enemy fire 10

Aircraft shot down 0

Average aircraft availability 86.5%

UH-1B 87.0%

UH-1D 86.0%

Structures damaged 16

Structures destroyed 7

VC KBA 36 (body count)

5 (est)

Crew members wounded

pilots pilots 1

crew chiefs 2

gunners 0

Emergency medical evacuation 62

Ammunition expended

7.62mm 191,640 rounds

40 mm 3,155 rounds

2.75 inch rockets 471

JP-4 fuel consumed 61,400 gallons

Aircraft accidents or incidents 0

On 14 Jun 66 the first edition of the 48th AHC Blue Star was printed. Realizing the value of having a unit newspaper both for members of the company and as a means of keeping the folks back home advised of our whereabouts and accomplishments, Major Roper, with the support of other field leaders came up with ideas for a unit paper. Captain James I. McDowell was assigned with the mission of seeing it through. The paper was greeted with overwhelming success and many a budding writer was discovered among company personnel.

Operation Beauragard (24 Jun to 14 Jul 66) found the 48th AHC again in general support of the 1st Bde, 101st Abn Div, and in direct support of the 1/327th Abn Inf Bn. The purpose of the operation was to exploit the success of Operation Hawthorne. It was suspected that the remnants of the battered 24th North Vietnamese Regiment would attempt to escape to the west into Cambodia and Laos. The size of the remaining enemy force was unknown. Operation Beauragard took place in the valley North-west of Dak To. Sporadic contact was made throughout the operation but significant contact with a large enemy force was never accomplished. The 48th AHC continued their normal support of C&C aircraft, resupply missions, medical evacuations and combat assaults, carrying troops to and from the battle field in support of the 101st Airborne Division. In addition they accomplished numerous missions in support of ARVN forces and American Special Forces throughout the tactical zone.

Statistical Data: Operation Beauragard

Total hours flown 948.7

Total sorties flown 3770

Total combat assault sorties 1264

Total cargo hauled (tons) 74.3

Total passengers carried 4602

Aircraft hit by enemy fire 0

Aircraft shot down by enemy fire 0

Average aircraft availability 91%

UH-1B 88%

UH-1D 94%

Structures damaged 37

Structures destroyed 7

VC KBA 1

Crew members wounded

pilots 1

crew chiefs 1

Emergency medical evacuations 21

Ammunition expended

7.62mm 157,880 rounds

40mm 2,091 rounds

2.75 inch rockets 345

Aircraft accidents and incidents

UH-1D (accident) 1

UH-1B (incident) 1

Far short of the 5 to 6 months reported for the 48th AHC's duration at Dak To, it received its travel orders and it was on the move again. The aircrews departed Dak To on 15 July 1996 and again had a couple of days at Phan Rang. The rear party of 1 UH-1D and 2 UH-1B's remained at Dak To with the rear echelon of the 1st Brigade, 101st Airborne Division, and then rejoined the company at Tuy Hoa. The remainder of the company loaded vehicles and equipment aboard USAF C-130 aircraft on 17 July and departed for Tuy Hoa.

Due to security considerations this unit history will be concluded at this point. The 48th AHC at Tuy Hoa participated in Operation John Paul Jones (20 Jul 66 to 4 Sep 66) and is now participating in Operation [nnnward] again in general support of the 1st Bde, 101st Abn Div.

At this writing the 48th AHC has 18 aviators of the original 55 aviators that accompanied the unit to Vietnam. All of these personnel will be rotating by 4 Nov 66. The company is presently undergoing reorganization with the remaining personnel and new personnel arriving daily.

Command of the 48th Assault Helicopter Company (UH-1) (A) changed from Major Harry Mck

Roper Jr. to Major Joel J. Williams on 26 September 1966.

Approved By

JOEL J. WILLIAMS

Major, Infantry

Commanding

**CHAPTER THIRTEEN: SONGS AND
POEMS WRITTEN AND SUNG BY
BLUE STARS**

- 1. A Chopper Pilot's Day**
- 2. A Message From My Heart**
- 3. American Fighting Man**
- 4. Army Aviation**
- 5. Ballad of the Gunners**
- 6. Blue Stars**
- 7. Chopper Jockey**
- 8. Green Flight Pay**
- 9. Gunship on my Tail**
- 10. Have Chopper - Will Hover**
- 11. Huey - Flying Man**
- 12. In Our Own Little World**
- 13. Ol' Phan Rang**
- 14. Phan Rang Tower**
- 15. Red Hot Pilot**

16. Short Timer's Blues

17. Sixteen Hours

18. Sky King

19. The Best Don't Play, They Mean Business

20. The 48th

21. The Joker's Song

22. The Medic

23. Ton That (Royal Family)

24. Victor Charlie

25. When My Tour's All Done This Fall

-

A CHOPPER PILOT'S DAY

By: Capt Jack Horne

CWO Bill Moore

In the early morning hours

Before the sun is bright

You can hear the turbines turning

as the choppers lift for flight.

A sleepless night is over

The pilots on their way

To face the fears and danger

Of a chopper pilot's day.

CHORUS:

A chopper pilot's day my boys

A chopper pilot's day

We face the fear and danger

Of a chopper pilot's day.

The VC will be hiding

For they know so very well

Should a gunship pilot spot them

He'll blast their soul to hell.

The smell of battle fills the air

The landing zone is near

The flight turns on it's final leg

No place for cowards here.

CHORUS

Machine guns chatter and rockets flash

An awesome sound and sight

But a welcomed one for us it is

For it causes Charlie's fright.

Our choppers settle on no-man's -land

And now our troops depart

Charging into battle

To win, in each man's heart.

CHORUS

An extra second on the ground

Could cost a pilot's life

And leave a tearful mother

Or a very lonely wife.

We clear the ground above the trees

There comes a blinding flash

On our right a ship is hit

We watch the awful crash.

CHORUS

A gunship comes onto the scene

To cover the crew's escape

A slick ship lands to pick them up

We pray they're not too late.

Then through the smoke we see them rise

Into the morning sky

A lucky crew is on that ship

T'was not their day to die.

CHORUS

All crews are now accounted for

We hear our leader say

We breathe a sigh, "We made it, through a chopper pilot's day."

BLUE STARS

By: 1LT Ronald K. Damon

(Tune - Sky Ball Mail)

There she flies-look at her go

She's a 48th-a sight to behold

Flying through the sky all day

Take a warning and don't get in her way.

A group of pilots-each one a man

He knows his job-like the palm of his hand

Name the job-and they'll do it great

They're the Blue Stars-from the 48th.

They've got a guncrew-that just won't quit

Their blazing rockets-their guns do spit

Name the place-and point it out

And the Jokers will wipe it off the map.

Hit an LZ late at night

No mistakes-do it right

Tracers burning-flares so bright

Have no fear - Blue Stars are out tonight.

TON THAT (Royal Family)

By: 1LT Ronald K. Damron

(Tune - New York Girls)

From California I traveled

Cross waters far and wide

And nary a person did I know

Nor what ahead did lie

Traveled for a day or so

My home from me grew you

And then before two days had passed

I fell in Vietnam.

CHORUS:

Singing Mamasan chews beetlenut

Babysan no clothes

Papasan's a VC

But you ain't supposed know

You can tell them one and all

For Charlie is their names

And Mamasan and Babysan

Like Papasan Same Same.

Papasan works in the field

Harvesting the rice

Waves at choppers overhead

Papasan's so nice

But just forget and turn your back

And fly your chopper low

And Papasan will shoot you down

With his M-1 hoe.

CHORUS

You go to the market place

To spend your hard earned P's

And the people in the market

They say come from me

They say since you American

And you so very nice

They'll sell you anything you want

At only twice the price.

CHORUS

The pretty girls in Saigon

Will try and lead you on

You buy they tea

They hold your hand

But there's just one thing wrong

When you say you are fini

And you have no more pay

They say go home American

You wasted my whole day.

CHORUS

Listen to me people

And if you have your doubts

I can tell you everything

I know what it's about

When Papasan and Mamasan

Try and take you in

Just say I really like you

But I think you're number 10.

CHORUS

BALLAD OF THE GUNNERS

By: Sgt Lionel T. Wallace

(Tune - Green Berets)

We're chopper gunners of the forty eight

Always in the shooting and never late

Mighty handy with a sixty-gun

Sometimes there's glory but it's never fun.

Armor vests upon our chests

With machine guns and rockets were the best

About our shooting we can brag

Because each man has been a "Laig".

We got a letter from Ho Chi Minh

Wanted to know if we thought we'd win

Our answer to him was mighty sweet

Went out and killed 200 of his "elite".

Armor vests upon our chests

with machine guns and rockets we're. the best

One of our gunners went down today

Old Charlie will have a lot of hell to pay.

For some we hear there is a test

But as chopper gunners we're the best

And if we go down in flames some night

Our guns will rattle till the end of flight.

Armor vests upon our chests

with machine guns and rockets we're the best

One of gunners went down from 500 today

Came crawling in that night, said everythings OK!

Back at home his sweetheart waits

But her gunner soldier has met his fate

He just re-upped, specialist stripes he got

And he's still that old brain pot.

Armor vest upon our chests

With machine gun rockets we're the best

You can tell old Charlie that we're here to stay

Or they'll send us back D.O.A..

-

GATHER AT THE RIVER

Taken from one of CWO James McCartt's

"Sermons on the Beach"

Gather around me brothers, and tonight I'm gonna preach to you about the greatest sin - the greatest evil - and the greatest home wrecker that this ol' world has ever known! Yes tonight I'm gonna speak that topic - DRINK! Do you realize my friend that alcohol dullens your brain and makes you do things that you would never do if you were sober? Do you realize that alcohol will tear your body gradually apart and have you looking twice your actual age? Do you furthermore realize that alcohol will break up your home, cause your wife to leave you, and your children to despise you? Do you know that it can bring you personal, financial, as well as other worries and headaches?

My friend! Listen to me! Stop! Stop right now! Give up your drink and throw that glass away! Cast all thoughts of it aside and start anew this very moment!

My friend -- If I owned all the beer in Phan Rang - I would pour it into the river! If I owned all the whiskey in Vietnam - I would pour it into the river! If I owned all the Scotch and Sodas in the United States - I would pour them into the river! If I owned all the liquor in this whole wide world - I would pour it into the river!

Now will the congregation please stand as we sing --- "Shall We Gather at the River"!

CHORUS:

Shall we gather at the river

The beautiful river, the beautiful river

Gather with the Saints at the river

That flows by the throne of God.

RED HOT PILOT

By: Capt Donald R. Kelsey

(Tune - Long Tall Texan)

Well I'm a red hot pilot, I fly an HU1B

(He's a pilot, flies an HU1B)

(He's a pilot, flies an HU1B)

When people come my way

They look at me and say

U-Rah U-Rah is that your HU1B?

Well I fly through the jungle kinda low and slow

Keepin' old Charlie way down in his hole

When he hears me coming well he knows darn well

If I see him I'll blast his soul into hell.

For I'm a red hot pilot, I fly a big iron bird

(He's a pilot, flies a big iron bird)

For I'm a red hot pilot, I fly a big iron bird

(He's a pilot, flies a big iron bird)

When people come my way

They look at me and say

U-Rah U-Rah is that your bird?

Well I fly so low I knock the limbs of the trees

Keeping old Charlie right down on his knees

When he hears me coming he jumps right in the grass

And he hides in his hole until I go home for gas.

Well I'm a red hot pilot, I'm the scourge of the sky

(He's a pilot, he's the scourge of the sky)

Well I'm a red hot pilot, I'm the scourge of the sky

(He's a pilot, he's the scourge of the sky)

When people come my way

They look at me and say

My-O-My is you the scourge?

-

THE JOKER SONG

By: SP5 Larry Ephan

(Tune - Battle of New Orleans)

CHORUS:

We fired our guns and the VC started dying

There wasn't as many as there was a while ago

We fired once more and they began to run

Down in a tunnel up to Ho Chi Minh's door.

Ol' Major Jones said we'll catch 'em by surprise

We won't fire our guns till we see where they lie

Then we'll swoop in low and let our rockets go

Right down on Victor Charlie's own front door.

CHORUS

Well, they ran in the bush and they ran in the bamboo's

They ran in the tunnels where our rockets couldn't go

They ran so fast that the guns couldn't catch 'em

Down in a tunnel up to Ho Chi Minh's door.

Ol' Victor Charlie we caught him in a nest

When we got through shooting the place was a mess

When the Jokers go on a shooting spree like this

You know darn well that we hardly ever miss.

CHORUS

Well, we fired our guns and the tracers started burning

We fired at Charlie who was waiting down below

We fired once more and they began to run

Down in a tunnel up to Ho Chi Minh's door.

Guts and guns are the Jokers biggest pride

Our only biggest problem is to shoot 'em in the eye

When our ammo runs out and fuel gets low

We head back to Tuy Hoa and get some more.

CHORUS

We fired our guns and the VC started dying
There wasn't as many as there was awhile ago
We fired once more and they began to run
Down in a tunnel up to Ho Chi Minh's door.

Jokers 1 & 2 with 3 & 4 there's 5, 8 & 10 set to go
with our turbines a singing and engines at its best
we pull collective pitch while the sun began to set.

CHORUS

Once we were all up really got flying
We went to the area were Charlie was before
All the Victor Charlie's that a ran into hiding
Have swore not to tangle with the Jokers anymore.

THE BEST DON'T PLAY, THEY MEAN BUSINESS

By: SP5 Orville L. Stover

Victor Charlie at Ol' Dak To
Thought he was smart but he didn't know
That there were Jokers just standing by
Always ready to go and fly
Now they have guts and they have guns
And they will put Charlie on the run.

The first Platoon, now they don't care
They are too scared to go anywhere

The second platoon is not too bad
But when they must go they all look sad
The Joker Platoon, they are the best
When they go out they put Charlie to rest
We're sorry about that but we must say
When we have a mission we just don't play.

-

IN OUR OWN LITTLE WORLD

By: The 48th

(Tune - Henry the 8th)

I'm Archie the Harrell I am, I am
I'm Archie the Harrell I am, I am
Called for a flare the other night
Gosh Almighty what a terrible sight
Now I see the Airfield - Airfield?
Looks so funny upside down
I'm an all weather pilot Archie
Archie the Harrell I am.

I'm little Jack Horne I am, I am
I'm little Jack Horne I am, I am
I run the mess hall around this place
Gosh Almighty what a terrible disgrace
I don't eat in the mess - mess Hall?
Wouldn't eat there to save my life

I'm a cook's supervisor - Horne

Little Jack Horne I am.

I'm John the Jenks I am, I am

I'm John the Jenks I am, I am

Went for a flight the other day

Somehow I seem to have lost my way

And now I'm sitting in Song Be - Song Be?

Forgot to turn my switches to start

And now I'm using my checklist

John the Jenks I am.

I'm Cambodia Jones I am, I am

I'm Cambodia Jones I am, I am

Went for a flight the other day

They tried to tell me that I lost my way

But I know where I am, I am

Never been lost in my life

I'm map reading pilot Jones

Cambodia Jones I am.

I'm Fixit 6 I am, I am

I'm Fixit 6 I am, I am

I fix airplanes for my pay

One just crashed the other day

And now I must recover it - recover it?

Wouldn't go out there to save my life

I'll leave it there in the jungle

Fixit 6 I am.

SKY KING

By: Capt Kris Kristofferson

(Tune - Big Bad John)

Every morning at the line you should see him arrive

About 5 foot 2 and weighted 185

Kinda narrow at the shoulder

And broad at the hips

Everybody knew he didn't give a darn, Sky King

Sky King, Sky King --- Short fat Sky.

Some say Sky was born in New Orleans

Where he put himself a rotor on a sewing machine

Cut his teeth on a collective pitch

Ol' Sky was a flying son of a gun, Sky King.

Sky King, Sky King --- Short fat Sky.

Then came the day at stagefield four

When his engine quite and wouldn't run anymore

Brave men sighed and hearts beat fast

Everybody thought he'd breathed his last

Except Sky

Sky King, Sky King --- Short fat Sky.

He just pushed the old pitch right down to the floor

But the damn rotor blade wouldn't turn anymore

So his rear puckered up and with a terrible sound

He just sucked the old chopper right off the ground, Sky King

Sky King, Sky King --- Short fat Sky.

Now the ship wasn't hurt but it took half the class

To get the seat cover out of Sky King's rear, Sky King.

They never reopened that worthless strip

Just put a marble stand on top of it

On that stand these words are seen

There ain't no butt that can pucker

Like ol' Sky King.

PHAN RANG TOWER

By: Capt Kris Kristofferson

Hello Phan Rang Tower this is Blue Star 851

I'm 5 miles from your airfield and my fuel is almost gone

My engine she's a coughing and my tack needles have split

You better call your crash crew out this damn thing's gonna quit.

Hello Blue Star 851, this is Phan Rang tower

We can't call our crash crew out this is their coffee hour

And we had just as soon you didn't land here for awhile

Because our visibility is not a half a mile.

Hello Phan Rang Tower this is Blue Star 851

I'd love to put this landing off but that just can't be done

My engine's belching fire and I'm run out of gas

I've got to set this chopper down before

I have a crash.

This is Phan Rang tower calling Blue Star 851

We'd like to know what kind of flight you are on

Our Operation's officer says you have not been cleared

You'll be grounded thirty days if you land that chopper here.

Hello Phan Rang Tower this is Blue Star 851

I'm up in pilot's heaven and my flying days are done

Tell my old commander that I'm sorry that I crashed

Tell your Operations Officer that he can kiss my ____!

THE MEDIC

By: Sgt Lionel T. Wallace

We have a little tent sitting in the sand

We call ourselves the medic clan

With pills in a bottle and syringes in our hand

Ain't a darn thing we're afraid of in this land

"Oh Big Bad Medic".

We canned a cat in the other day

Didn't seem like the pearly gates were far away

We threw him on a stretcher, pulled down his pants

Then stuck him in the rear and he got up and danced.

We sit around at night drinking alcohol

And throwing syringes at our little tent walls

Staying in practice so we don't miss

We stick them with a needle but they get no kiss.

We got a Doc, he's pretty straight

For weekends he's gonna get us a Ford V-8

Gonna load it with mamasans and head for the hills

Disease! We've got the market cornered on pills.

Went to the latrine and looked on the wall

Was a big sign "Unsanitary for all"

I knew it was put there by the medic clan

So I went out yelling "Lord help me man".

VICTOR CHARLIE

By: Unknown

(Tune - Rock of Ages)

Victor Charlie at Pleimi

Threw a hand grenade at me

So I caught it in my palm.

Threw it back, and he was gone

Victor Charlie at Pleimi

Thanks a lot you S.O.B.

GREEN FLIGHT PAY

By: Unknown

(Tune - Green Beret)

Silver wings upon my chest

I fly my chopper above the best

I can make more dough that way

But I can't wear no Green Beret.

Tennis shoes upon his feet

Some people call him sneaky Pete

He sneaks around the woods all day

wearing that funny Green Beret.

Its no jungle floor for me

I've seen a rubber tree

1000 men must take the test

While I fly home and take a rest.

And while I fly my chopper home

And leave him out there all alone

That is where Green Berets belong

Out in the jungle writing songs.

And when my little boy is grown

Don't leave him out there all alone

Just let him fly and give pay

Cause he can't spend no Green Beret.

And when my little boy is old

His silver wings all lined with gold

He then will wear a Green Beret

In the big parade on St. Patrick's Day.

-

CHOPPER JOCKEY

By: 1LT Ronald K. Damron

(Tune - 16 tons)

Some people say a man is made out of rock

But a pilot ain't nothin' but a flying jock

Flies his chopper all the day

Sings his songs and saves his pay.

CHORUS:

You fly 16 hours-and what do you get

One sore rear and a pound of sweat.

I awoke one morning when the sun didn't shine

Major Radford said-men don't ever mind

Cause where you're going you won't need a light

The name of the mission is suicide.

CHORUS

Now we're not scared-for we're still asleep

But Major Roper begins to speak

Said if you go down-here's what to do

Don't call me-I'll call you.

CHORUS

We start our choppers and head for the sky

Don't use lights unless you wanta die

Rotors hitting-people start to scream

I close my eyes and hope it's a dream.

CHORUS

Intelligence says it's a big LZ

You can land 40 ships in a "V"

But after we get there we here the same line

"Better try landing one at a time."

CHORUS

-

ARMY AVIATION

By: 1LT Ronald K. Damron

This world's a free world

The sky is our goal

Lift your eyes up to the heavens

The Army's on the go.

CHORUS:

Army aviation-flying above the best

Army aviation-flies and leaves the rest

Never a job too big

Never one too small

Army Aviators

Qualified to do them all.

Any time - day or night

Whether clouds or heavy rain

They can do the job for you

That's the way our men are trained.

CHORUS

We've got the big ones-got some little ones too

Choppers, fixed wing - you just name it -

Any that you could choose.

We've passed the big test

Now we're in full stride

Part of the greatest Army

And serving it with pride.

-

WHEN MY TOUR'S ALL DONE THIS FALL

By: Capt Donald R. Kelsey

(Tune - When my works all done this fall)

A group of jolly pilots discussing plans at ease

Says one I'll tell you something boys

If you will listen please.

I'm a chopper pilot and now I'm dressed in rags

I used to be a tough one boys

And go on great big jags.

But I have got a home boys, and a good one you all know

Although I haven't seen it

Since long, long, long, ago.

I'm going home to Dixie once more to see them all

I'm going to see my wife and kids

When my tour's all done this fall.

That very night this pilot went out to fly some guard

The night was dark and cloudy

And stormin' very hard.

The VC they got surprised and ran in wild stampede

This pilot tried to shoot them down

While flying at full speed.

His engine though it failed him, his chopper it did fall

That boy won't see his wife and kids

When his tour's all done this fall.

His body was so mangled the boys all thought him dead

They picked him up real gently

And laid him on his bed.

He opened his blue eyes and looking all around

He beckoned for his partners

To sit down on the ground.

George you take my helmet and Bill can have my bed

And Jim you take my pistol

After I am dead.

But think of me kindly when you look upon them all

For I'll not see my wife and kids

When my tour's all done this fall.

-

THE 48TH

BY: The 3rd (Guts & Guns) Platoon

Born at Fort Benning on 5 July

The year was 1965.

They had no choppers but they didn't care

If they ever got alerted they would go anywhere.

Then one day the order came down

To go to Vietnam and put Charlie under ground.

They sailed from California one bright November day

And set their feet upon the sand at the seaport Cam Ranh Bay.

**They climbed up on the Army trucks and everybody sang
We're here to whip on Charlie let's start at old Phan Rang.**

**They finally got their choppers
It sure did take a while
They headed out for Tuy Hoa, all had a great big smile.**

**They left their mark on Tuy Hoa and moved to Phan Thiet
They put the hurt on Charlie, but they were not finished yet.**

**At Nohn Co and Cheo Reo everything was slow
So they all picked up their bags and moved to old Dak To.**

**They finally got their camp set up,
They worked into the night
Charlie knew they had moved in,
But Charlie was scared to come and fight.**

**Operations got the mission and the CO yelled come on
We finally found old Charlie, he's hid in Toumorong.**

**They pulled pitch on the choppers, they never have been late
What Charlie didn't know, it was the mighty 48th.**

-

SIXTEEN HOURS

By: SP5 Thomas Rhodes

SP4 Paul Jagla

(Tune - 16 tons)

I woke up one morning when the sun didn't shine

I picked up my tool box and I walked to the line

My tail boom was sagging, engine oil needs filled

If Charlie don't get you then this chopper will.

You fly 16 hours and what do you get

Another CA and we're not through yet

Intermediate Inspection and the DI is due

Crank her up, we have a mission for you.

Turbines roaring, blades spinning fast

783 has a full load of gas

Off on the first mission of this long day

Sundown looks a long time away.

You fly 16 hours and what do you get

Another CA and you're not through yet

We just came in, so what do we do

We pull 9 hours of guard duty too.

Gunner and crew chief standing by

Briefing is over and we're ready to fly

Gripping 'bout the chopper and the gunner's job too

Seems that the pilots have nothing to do.

**You fly 16 hours and what do you get
Another darn job and you're not through yet
Bullets in the plane and the seat on our pants
Bullets in the fuel tank so we're out of gas.
Now the weather was stormy and the sky was black
Ole 783 ought to be back
St. Peter don't you call us cause we can't come
We're in this weather on another milk run.
You fly 16 hours and what do you get
Another tail chewin' and he's not through yet
The pilots are off in a day dream
But crew chief and gunner are stuck on the thing.**

AMERICAN FIGHTING MAN

By: Members of the 48th

**I'm an American fighting man
I serve my country where I can
And every place there's trouble is my home
Don't know where I'll be tomorrow
Maybe joy and maybe sorrow
I'm a rolling stone.**

CHORUS:

**Hear my plea, hear my destiny
A calling me to travel on
I know when I die that I won't be at home.**

**I'll not surrender of my own free will
I will stay and fight until
The last breath leaves my body cold and still
I've been here and I've been there
Well I've been damn near everywhere
And I learn more the further I go.
If by chance I'm overwhelmed
I'll keep on fighting from a prison cell
and let my captors know that I'll resist
Clean escape will be my goal
And I will never sell my soul
To those who'd take the freedom of a man.
If I'm questioned I will tell them
Nothing least I roast in hell
I know my friends can depend on me
Enemy interrogators ask me questions without answers
But from me they'll never learn.
I will never forget that I
Am an American fighting man
And I will give my life for my home
I may live or I may die
But I know God will show me why
My folks at home may have to cry.**

**GUNSHIP ON
MY TAIL**

By: Capt Donald R. Kelsey

(Tune - Tiger on my Tail)

**I've got a gunship on my tail its plain to see
And I won't be much when he gets through with me
I'm losing weight and turning kind of pale
It looks like I've got a gunship on my tail.
Everyday he chases me across that jungle floor
There just ain't no safe place anymore
Then at night the Mohawks come with SLAR and infrared
Sometimes I just wish that I were dead.
The other day we slipped upon their artillery
We were set to gun those redlegs down
Then with guns ablazing they came out of the sky
And all around men began to die.
We were set to overrun a place called Toumorong
Thought we had it made but we were wrong
At the crucial moment the gunships came on in
A raising hell and spoiled our plans again.
Man I hate those gunships more than anything around
Thought I would try and shoot one down
I cracked down on the leadship but his wingman came around
And sent me to the happy hunting ground**

HUEY FLYING MAN

By: 1 LT Ronald K. Damron

(Tune - Truck Driving Man)

Well I hop aboard my old chopper

And then like a flash I'm gone

I get that old Huey a rolling

I'll be on my to fight the Cong.

CHORUS:

Well if you pour me another cup of coffee

For it is the best in the land

Then I'll crank my old Huey and get moving

For I'm a chopper flying man.

Had a briefing just this morning

Said they had Charlie on the run

It's up to the Blue Star chopper pilots

To make sure Charlie's work is done.

CHORUS

The Jokers are cranked and a raring

To clear a path for the slicks

Their rockets thundering into mountains

I bet old Charlie's getting sick.

CHORUS

The slicks are coming up on final

Formation packed in so tight

Jokers a flying on the flanks

Charlie's gonna bite the dust tonight.

CHORUS

The slicks have dropped off their pad

Pulling pitch and leaving the LZ

Jokers make the final pass

Another mission now complete.

CHORUS

-

HAVE CHOPPER - WILL HOVER

By: 1 LT Ronald K. Damron

CHORUS:

We travel through the sky

We travel through the night

Any place anywhere

Just name it - that's our life

We're the men from the greatest state

We all come from the 48th.

We fly choppers - that's our life

We do our job but never gripe

We take the good along with the bad

But the good is something that we ain't had.

CHORUS

Come on got a mission - in the dark of the night

And won't be back till its done just right

After we're back and the sun goes down

We'll [sour] Blue Star sounds.

CHORUS

Lift your eyes and follow us

We'll lead the way - no trouble or fuss

If you want something done

And you want it done right

We're listed under Blue Star

And flying day and night.

SHORT TIMER'S BLUES

By: 1 LT Ronald K. Damron

(Tune -I Walk the Line)

If you're in trouble and find that you need aid

If Charlie's got you pinned down and you're afraid

If you want a chopper to come and set you free

Do me a favor and don't call me.

If you are out of food and need some new recruits

Or if you want supplies and jungle boots

You say to drop them off in your LZ

Well would you take them from a thousand feet.

It's not that I mind Charlie or his friends

I just don't care about seeing them again

I'm getting short, and there's just one more thing

I hate to tempt old Charlie's aim.

For eleven months I was king of the road

I tried to carry more than my load

It's not that I mind flying with the gang
But I'm too short to play these games.
I'd like to leave this country far behind
This yellow streak is creeping up my spine
I've got to see the Doc 'fore its too late
I'm nearing my rotation date.

OLD PHAN RANG

By: Unknown

They say that ol' Phan Rang's a hell of a place
The organization a low down disgrace
There are Captains and Majors and Light Colonels too
Their hands in their pockets with nothing to do.
They stand on the runway
They scream and they shout
About many things they know nothing about.
For all they accomplish
They might as well be
Shoveling sand on the Isle of Capri.
Singing - Ring - Ding
Shove it in your ear
Better things are coming bye and bye
Bull Crap!!

ENCLOSURE 2 To Airmobile Techniques and Procedures SOP

AERIAL GUNNERY FOR HELICOPTER

GENERAL

Organic fire support for air assault operations is furnished by both conventional ground artillery units in air assault configurations and other divisional units equipped with armed helicopters. Units equipped with the aerial weapons systems are the aerial artillery battalion, cavalry squadron and weapons companies of the assault helicopter battalions. Target destruction or neutralization may be accomplished by either aerial or surface fire support means, but the extra mobility and range of aerial weapons units provide unique capabilities to support air assault operations. Although limited by ammunition and fuel load capacity, the armed helicopter units provide the commander with a significant increase and extension of available fire support beyond that provided by organic ground units of the airmobile division. To best employ armed helicopter units, commanders must know the principles, the weapons systems, and the procedures involved in target engagement.

PRINCIPLES OF ARMED HELICOPTER ATTACK

Successful employment of aerial weapons units involves seven basic considerations. These are speed, surprise, volume and type of fire, control, target approach, timing and terrain utilization.

Speed in the actual attack is essential to achieve surprise and the maximum effect with minimum vulnerability. All attacks are normally executed at maximum speed. Consideration of speed is also involved in the time required to reach and engage distant targets, and in the reaction time of on-call armed helicopters.

Surprise is highly desirable to maximize the effect of fires on a target and reduce aircraft vulnerability. Prior planning to select the best approach routes and best methods of attack, together with maximum speed in the attack itself, give the best assurance of surprise. Timing the attack to take best advantage of weather and lighting conditions, and selecting times when troops in the target area are fatigued or not alert also enhance surprise.

Volume and type of fire must be carefully planned for maximum effect. Firepower commensurate with the nature of the target and target [missing rest of this paragraph which appears on the top of page 3-2 in original document] both maximum effect and minimum helicopter exposure.

Control of the attack includes all measures which best take advantage of the possibilities involved. Ingenuity must be exercised to achieve surprise or deception so that application of fire is made at the exact time and in the manner best suited to the target. Target engagement by a single aircraft is rare, and in nearly all cases, two or more aircraft under a single flight leader engage the target. The flight leader must closely coordinate and control all aircraft throughout the entire attack. Experience, judgment, instantaneous communication and team performance are prerequisites to control. Control also implies the close coordination of helicopter attacks with the operations of other artillery aircraft, troops on the ground, and supporting artillery.

Target approach is normally made from the direction of greatest target vulnerability. Other factors such as terrain which offers covered or concealed approaches, winds which offer a more

silent approach, position of the sun, and multiple approaches, suitable for simultaneous attack from several directions must be quickly analyzed and exploited. This decision, by the flight leader, is perhaps the most critical element in target engagement.

Timing includes both the selection of the general time period of the attack and the more important precise coordination between aircraft to insure simultaneous target engagement by all attacking elements. The degree of success of the attack is, in most cases, closely related to the degree of coordination of attacking elements.

Terrain is utilized in the attack to cover the approach and the break from the target. Again, skillful planning and control is the key to success. Achievement of surprise, silent approach and simultaneous massing of fires require that the flight leader utilize all terrain possibilities to best advantage.

WEAPONS SYSTEMS

The various systems in use within the airmobile division may be categorized as area and point for aerial artillery units, suppressive and area for the cavalry, and suppressive fire delivery types for the weapons companies of the lift battalions. For specific pre-planning missions, fire support units may be acquired and tailored to the mission; on normal operations, supporting aerial weapons units with a task force will include a mix of weapons suitable for all anticipated targets.

The aerial artillery battalion is armed with the M3 area type weapons system which consists of two fixed pods of 24-2.75 inch rockets each, mounted one on each side of the UH-1B helicopter. The rate of fire is six pairs of rockets per second. Minimum range, determined by fuse arming, is 300 meters. Maximum effective range is 2,500 meters, although true maximum range is over 6,000 meters. Total rounds in each load is 48, each with a six meter bursting radius, thus each aircraft load in salvo is roughly equivalent to one battery volley of conventional 105mm artillery. Fired intermittently, the M3 may also be utilized in the suppressive fire role.

Suppressive fire weapons of the weapons companies include the M2 and M6 machine gun systems. The M2 system utilizes two 7.62mm M60c fixed machine guns, one on each side of the helicopter. Rate of fire is 600 rounds per minute for each gun, with a total load of 550 rounds per gun. An elevation range of nine degrees may be obtained, and guns may be elevated at the rate of six degrees per second or depressed at nine degrees per second. Effective range extends to 400 meters; with 800 meters maximum range. The M6 system is roughly equivalent to two M2 systems, but with greater flexibility. The same basic M60c machine guns are utilized, two on each side of the helicopter. Guns may be elevated to 15 degrees inboard and 70 degrees outboard. The total rate of fire, using all four guns, is 2,400 rounds per minute.

The M16, a combination of the M6 machine gun system with two 7-round pods of 2.75 inch rockets added, gives the commander a system with a high degree of flexibility of employment. Having both rockets and machine guns makes it suitable for area and suppressive type fire.

Point target systems of the aerial artillery are now limited to the M22, in which six wire-guided missiles are mounted on racks, three on each side of the helicopter. Rate of fire is one per minute. Effective ranges are 500 to 3,000 meters.

TARGET ENGAGEMENT

In addition to the factors discussed above in principles of attack, effectiveness of the aerial weapons unit is dependent upon the teamwork and skill of both the gunner and pilot. With rigid systems, where the pilot is also the gunner, accuracy is determined by the pilot's ability to maintain coordinated flight throughout his firing run. Any uncoordinated turning maneuver during a firing run will result in error in both range and deflection. Gunnery skill, acquired only through practice and experience, is the ultimate factor in successful aerial helicopter gunnery. The specific attack pattern for any target may vary widely, and must be tailored to each situation.

The flight patterns of helicopter elements armed with the M2 or M6 machine gun systems involve wide variations, but the normal firing run begins at a range of 300 meters from the target and terminates within 100 meters of the target. Accuracy is inversely proportional to range, thus fire becomes more accurate as the helicopter approaches the target. During engagement, the helicopter dives at maximum speed. See Figure 1. The steeper the angle of attack, the smaller the range dispersion pattern. For maximum effect, regardless of the angle of attack, the long axis of the elliptical firing pattern should coincide with the long axis of the target. See Figure 2. In the delivery of suppressive fires, the weapons companies are most frequently utilized in escort and security roles, and to secure landing zones during air assaults. Targets engaged are usually targets of opportunity in and around the landing zone. During this type mission, helicopters are employed in trail formation.

The M22 missile system provides the division with an organic airborne anti-armor capability. The M22 is employed only against point targets, normally armored vehicles. Since the missile flight is wire-guided, an unobstructed line of sight between the gunner and the target must be maintained for accurate delivery. Accuracy is dependent upon the skill of the gunner, who guides one round at a time to the target. Although hit probability is increased by shorter ranges, engagement at longer ranges reduces vulnerability and enhances surprise. Attacking aircraft may use the pop-up technique and remain relatively stationary during engagement, or move slowly toward the target on a level or descending flight path. Lateral or turning movements with regard to the target tend to greatly reduce the gunner's accuracy.

Aerial artillery helicopters, equipped with the M3 rocket system, are the most flexible area fire weapons in the Air Assault arsenal, and are utilized on a wide variety of missions. Assault preparatory fires are employed to neutralize enemy positions prior to assaults by placing direct aerial fire on the objective. During the actual assault direct suppressive fires are delivered in or near the landing zone by artillery helicopters which orbit in the area or remain on-call in forward larger areas until initial assault objectives are secured. The short response times of on-call aerial ships greatly extend the artillery fire power available to the commander. Orbit area selection is based upon the desires of the support ground commander, to whom the aerial artillery element commander and the fire support coordinator make recommendations. Known enemy strong point locations and local air defenses are primary considerations in recommending orbit areas. Counter battery fire missions may be flown by aerial artillery ships, to include night missions. Aerial artillery units are particularly effective in missions against radar-directed anti-aircraft systems, using a low level, multi-directional attack pattern under the radar screening capability. The flexible fire power and mobility of aerial artillery make it particularly useful to cover withdrawals of either ground or air assault units. The harassing and interdiction fire plans of conventional artillery units may be reinforced and greatly extended in depth by employment of aerial artillery aircraft. The largest number of aerial rocket missions involve targets of opportunity, due to the unique ability of the armed helicopter to both locate and engage these targets. The two basic flight formations utilized in the attack of targets of opportunity are extended, in which aircraft fly in trail, and the spread, in which aircraft on line are able to fire simultaneously. In either formation, attacks may employ the pop-up technique, in which aircraft fly nap-of-the-earth, climb rapidly to

attack altitude at a distance of about 2,500 and 3,000 with ranges between 1,500 and 1,000 meters. Disengagement occurs as soon as rockets are fired and attacking aircraft return to low attitude without overflying the target. Except for targets of opportunity, aerial rocket fire missions are normally received from the reinforced or supported unit, or through artillery fire control channels. Fire mission requests and fire orders within the aerial artillery battalion are standardized to expedite receipt and completion of fire missions.

Surveillance reports are rendered after each mission, by the firing element leader to the unit which requested the mission. Damage and causality assessments are vital intelligence and speedy, accurate reporting is essential to keeping the commander informed.

Night [missing the rest of the sentence at the top of page 3-6 in the original document] ... and more careful map analysis, [not] frequently achieve greater devastation and disorganization of enemy forces due to surprise and reduced defensive capability. The flash of artillery provides an ideal night target for rocket aircraft. Illumination may be used to insure more delivery of fires, but at the expense of loss of surprise.

Six general rules of target engagement for the armed helicopter units are: Engage at maximum range, change the direction of each firing run, maintain continuous fire from initial engagement through disengagement, attack at maximum feasible air speed, attack from over known secure positions if possible, and avoid overflight of the target.

[Back to Memories Page](#)